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**THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS  
IN ENGLAND  
(1885-1920)**

**DR HARISH P KAUSHIK**  
*with a foreword by*  
**LORD FENNER BROCKWAY**

**RESEARCH : DELHI**

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*Dedicated*

*To*

*My Parents*

*But for whose inspiration The Present  
work would not have been Possible.*

## FOREWORD

IT is a strange event in history that the Indian National Congress should have been inaugurated very largely by British officials. There is little doubt that they were concerned to provide a constitutional outlet to the growing opinion among India's professional elite for a greater participation in the administration of their country, but Hume, Wedderburn, Cotton and others were also sincere liberals. Their first object was to provide a forum for the discussion of Indian problems. But they did also act the somewhat romantic purpose of providing a nucleus of an Indian Parliament which would prove the ability of Indians for responsible self government. This is a curious incident in history, because later the National Congress became in such continuous conflict with the British authorities, involving repression and the imprisonment of Gandhi, Nehru and thousands of members before Independence was gained.

The interest of Mr Kaushik's book is that he has told of the more permanent interest and support in England, even when the Indian cause came into conflict with the British Government. When I came out of prison in 1919—I had refused to fight in what I regarded as an imperialist War—I was invited to become an organiser for the India League with which Mr Krishna Menon and Mr Saklatwala were the inspiring heads. I did not accept this invitation, but as Secretary of the Independent Labour Party and Editor of its newspaper the *New Leader*, I initiated many resolutions at the Labour Party conference, in favour of Indian Independence and wrote many articles.

Looking back, I suppose this had some influence on British opinion within the Labour Party at that time. Even before this, for a short period from 1920 to 1921, I became Joint Secretary of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. Mr Kaushik has told of the important work which this Committee in its considerable history carried out, but it was a casualty of Mahatma Gandhi's decision to end foreign propaganda. Perhaps, in a way, I contributed to this decision. At the request of Mr Patel I made a research of the method of non co-operation in National struggle for Mahatma Gandhi. The Committee, when it was wound up, owed

me quite a lot of salary. I wrote to Gandhi about it and to my surprise received a cheque with his signature upon it. The last thing I ever expected was to see Gandhi's name on such a monetary mundane document as this.

I am writing of personal matters as a relief to the detailed factual record of Mr. Kaushik. Let me go on, I met Gandhi at Dover when he came to the Round Table Conference, and I have a happy memory of my little daughter Margaret presenting him with a bouquet at the welcome meeting at Friends House, the Quaker headquarters, in London. I used to visit him in his simple rooms in Kennington. He would be sitting crosslegged on the floor, with his spinning wheel, and would talk with a combination of principle and shrewdness as I have heard from no other man. In the background would be an English woman portrait painter to whose presence he had given permission at my request. That portrait is now being sold to an American University at quite a price.

Then in 1929 I was elected to Parliament and was suspended from the Assembly because I insisted on making a speech of protest when quite out of order against the imprisonment of Gandhi, Nehru, 6000 members of Congress and the suppression of the organisation. An unusual incident occurred after the Members had decided by a vote of over 400 to 17 that I should be expelled. The teller, on my side, standing in front of the Mace to announce the result, suddenly thought if he ran away with the Mace, the House would not be able to do business and therefore would be unable to suspend me. He picked up the Mace and tried to run away with it, but he was caught and suspended with me.

On another occasion I was protesting against the arrest of Indians for wearing Gandhi caps. Tories on the other side of the House shouted 'put it on', which I did. And I made the point that I had committed an offence in the British Parliament for which Indians were imprisoned in their own land.

About another incident of which I have such a satisfying memory. I had won a place in the ballot for a Motion and tabled a demand that Indian political prisoners should be released. The Secretary of State, Mr. Wedgewood Benn—father of the present Minister of Technology, and later Lord Stansgate, sent for me and asked me to reword the motion on more moderate lines. I agreed to do so against the advice of James Maston, the leader of our Independent

Labour Party group, and when the debate came the Government accepted my motion which, I am afraid, had little effect on the fate of Indian prisoners

If I am to continue with reminiscences there was my visit to the Indian National Congress at Madras, Christmas 1927. I was smashed up in motor accident on the eve of the conference, but I had seen its venue the day before. I was amazed. A special railway line and station had been built for the incoming delegates, and there was a vast prefabricated hall. I suppose about 30 thousand people poured in from all over India. I was unable to attend the Congress but Gandhi and Nehru, indeed Mrs Annie Besant and others, came to see me each day. This was the Congress when the decision was taken for the aim of India's absolute Independence.

So we moved forward to the Second World War. Congress took the lead that it could not support British aims until India's independence was recognised. Congress had few friends in England at that time. With Reg Renold, who had long before taken Gandhi's non co operation 'ultimatum' to the Viceroy, I was among those who formed the Indian Freedom Committee and in a basement of Soho I joined Indians in London who courageously maintained the Congress line. They called that basement 'Swaraj House' and it became historic later because the Premiers and Ambassadors of many African countries used it to meet and plan when they were students in London.

The War ended, and the Labour Government decided it was going to recognise Indian independence. This was partly due to the anti-imperialist sentiments which had been created over the years by English supporters of Indians right but it was also a reflection of the harsh fact that Indian troops were so tired of fighting that they would not have been reliable in any effort to crush India.

Mr Kaushik's book is about activity within Britain in support of India's claim. Perhaps what I have written will give some indication of its more personal background.

*LORD FENNER BROCKWAY*

## PREFACE

FORGETFULNESS and neglect has enveloped the vital activities of the early leaders of the Indian National Congress in England. No aspect of this organisation can be more interesting than the study of the British work of the Congress for the history of India's freedom movement during the period 1885-1920. Since the early leaders had built their high hopes and faith on British justice, fairplay and righteousness, they agitated with constitutional means which suited to the temperament of the British people. A.O. Hume has been assigned a prominent role in organising the Indian propaganda in England. But the idea did not originate from Hume. Dadabhai Naoroji, William Digby, W.C. Bannerjee and Eardley Norton were the personalities who initiated the matter in this direction. However much credit is given to Hume who thought of a planned activity in England on behalf of the Congress. Hume, as one of the founders of the Indian National Congress in 1885, having failed in India in convincing the British officials for Indian political reforms, planned to expand the Congress work to England, as the seat of power was Britain and not India. It was conceived that if the British nation could be enlightened on the Indian subjects, concessions were consequently to reach the Indian hands. With this belief, Hume organised the English activity on behalf of the Congress in consultation with several English friends. Luckily he received the co-operation and zealous support of the British as well as Indian leaders for the purpose. William Wedderburn, William Digby, George Yulu, W.C. Bonnerjee, W.S. Caine, C.E. Schwann, Mac Laren, J.E. Ellis, Henry Cotton and Dadabhai Naoroji, extended their hands and subscribed to his idea. They readily agreed to arrange and work for British propaganda on behalf of the Congress. As an immediate result they were successful in obtaining the sympathies of several Englishmen, most of them Liberals, Radicals and Labours, who helped considerably in changing the political climate of England in favour of Indian cause. They put the Indian grievances before the British nation, and voiced India's claim for political advancement. Chief among those included Eardley Norton, Mac Neil, Seaymour Keay, Samuel Smith, Keir Hardie, H.E.A. Cotton, T.H. Roberts, R.T. Reid, Dr. H.V. Rutherford, S.K. Rateliff, Alfred Webb,



Ben Spoor, Col. Wedgewood, H M Stephense, Dr G B Clark, Douglas Hall, W A Hunter, Gordon Hewart, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, H.S.L. Polak, Fenner Brockway, Ramsay Macdonald, Joseph Peas, Engere Wasan and Pathwick Lawrence. They proved very useful in keeping Indian subjects alive in the British Parliament and else where.

The organised activity of the British Agency of the Congress was conducted through the media of Press, Parliament Platform and Deputations which represented INDIA—its weekly organ, Indian Parliamentary Committee public meetings in London and other parts of the Country, and inter-change of British and Indian leaders respectively. It stirred up the British nation with its vigorous propaganda, and endeavoured to enlighten the British public on Indian subjects, which had hitherto been neglected, unheeded and misinterpreted by the British officials. Its activities became more extensive when the 19th century drew to its close. But the rise of extremism of which B G Tilak, B C Pal and Lajpat Rai were the chief leaders on the horizon of Indian politics in the beginning of the 20th century dimmed its prospects. Yet its leaders continued with their work with courage and undefatigating efforts. Even Tilak persisted in the approach and valued its activities to a greater extent. This political propaganda, embodied in the British Committee of the Congress continued upto 1920 when M K Gandhi appeared on the Indian scene with his weapons of non cooperation and Satyagraha. Gandhi was convinced that the concentration of political agitation in India alone could hit hard at the British bureaucracy to part with its authority in India. Consequently the work of the Congress in England was withdrawn. Perhaps Gandhi was aware of the results of the efforts of the early pioneers like Naoroji, Bonnerjee, Wedderburn and others who laboured hard and toiled for their object of wresting power from the reluctant British autocrats. Lord Morley—the Liberal leader and a Secretary of State for India who was considered to be their friend and supporter, rejected their demand for the establishment of a Parliamentary Government in India. They again expected a great deal from Montagu—another Liberal Secretary of State for India, who too gave them a shock by offering 'inadequate and unsatisfactory Reforms' in 1919. It was, therefore, felt by the rising generation that the old leadership failed to force the ruling party to yield to the Indian aspirations. The emergence of a new spirit, thus, marked a new era in the history of Indian nationalist movement.

The present work, in a way, clears the two divorced periods of the Congress activities i.e. 1885-1920 and 1921-1947. The former deals with the ploughing work of the first torch bearers of the Indian Independence. Indeed much work has been done by the scholars while combing the data and events of the early history of the Congress. Yet this aspect of the Congress activity has, hitherto, escaped the attention of the writers and scholars of the Indian National Movement. Complete information and analytical investigation is not found in any study of the Congress. For instance earlier works on the Indian National Congress such as 'The Rise and Growth of the Congress in India (1832-1920) by Girija Mookerji and C.F. Andrews (1938), and History of the Indian National Congress Vol.I (1885-1935) by B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya (1935) do not shed considerable light on this important aspect. The former devotes one full chapter on the British Congress Committee and the latter contains scanty information on the subject; and that too in a scattered manner. The activities of the Indian National Congress in England have not also been dealt with properly in scholarly works recently published. History of the Freedom Movement in India Vol.I (1962) by R.C. Majumdar contains inadequate information on the Indian propaganda in England carried by the British Congress Agency. Similarly P.C. Ghose undertook researches and published his work 'The Development of the Indian National Congress (1892-1909), 1960. He has attempted to deal with the subject and thrown some light on the efforts of the Indian leaders in England in his Introductory chapter, but his main concern has been the efforts of the Congress in India for the solution of economic and political problems. Hira Lal Singh in his doctoral work 'Problems and Policies of the British in India'—1885-1898 (1963) has given a brief and scholarly analysis of the activities of the Indian National Congress in England. Since the period of his studies and investigation is short, he too has avoided to make a detailed discussion on the role of INDIA, the British Congress Committee and the Indian Parliamentary Committee. More recently B.B. Majumdar and B.P. Majumdar have published their book on 'Congress and Congressmen in the Pre-Gandhian Era 1885-1917 (1967). But they have also given a brief account of the formation of the British Committee and foundation of the INDIA journal. They have talked nothing of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. Such an important aspect of the Congress has been covered in a small chapter of ten pages only.

Another work recently published is of Daniel Argov 'Moderates and Extremists' (1967) He has, no doubt, referred the Congress Agency and its organs in England occasionally while discussing the Congress movement with special reference to Surendranath Banerjea and Lala Lajpat Rai Yet this work hardly contains much valuable and authentic information regarding the British Committee, INDIA, and the Indian Parliamentary Committee What is more interesting is this that all these writers and scholars have not clearly distinguished the Indian Political Agency and the British Congress Committee Thus all these writers and researchers have not bothered to inquire into the Congress' valuable work in England, and a detailed and a systematic study of the studies so far It is, therefore, essential in the interest of academic investigation that a discussion regarding various aspects of the propagandist activities of the British Congress Committee should be dealt with at length Such a discussion is necessary for the proper understanding of the role the British branch of the Congress played in fostering Indian propaganda in England and for political reforms

This study of Congress work in England is a result of about six years of labour The rich years took me to the 'Research Pilgrimages' for diverse sources of material—much of which is original such as Minutes of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress (the document is available only in India and used extensively by me), complete file of the INDIA journal—an official press organ of the English branch of the Congress, annual reports of the Indian National Congress, Confidential records of the Government, Private correspondence of the Indian Viceroys and the Secretaries of State for India, Private Papers of Indian leaders, debates in the British Parliament and other relevant and important material pertaining to the problem Information from such living persons as were connected with the Congress activities in England directly or indirectly was also sought either through correspondence or personal meetings In presenting the survey and assessment of the Congress work in England, a detached and objective view has been taken of course some good material is available in London also on this problem including private papers and a few journals but they are largely of historical nature However I had to face numerous difficulties in digging out the hidden treasure of the original material for detailed information on which the present work is based principally

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE book is the result of a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Agra in 1971. I can never forget the generous help and co-operation of Dr. Jivraj N. Mehta—our former Indian High Commissioner in the United Kingdom. He helped me with the addresses of some living English personalities associated directly or indirectly with the Indian activities in England for India's freedom. As a result I came in contact with Lord Fenner Brockway—the only living personage of the period under study and who was also an active member of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. I express my sincere gratitude to him for his invaluable help. He regularly supplied all available information through correspondence along-with his own memoirs, and thus helped a great deal. It is a privilege to me that he very kindly agreed to write a 'Foreword' for the present work. I am, however, aware that what he has so generously written about his reminiscences will be of great value to the scholars of the Indian freedom movement.

Lord Sorenson—another British M.P., who also participated actively in spreading the message of Indian Independence in England, and in combating with the British authorities on behalf of the Indian people has enlightened me on the subject through correspondence. I express my heart-felt thanks to him. My special thanks are due to Dr. V. V. Giri the Honourable President of the Indian Republic, who granted me an interview while he was the Vice President. He obliged me with replies to my queries whenever I wrote to him.

Dr. Gopinath—Associate Professor of Political Science at Agra College, Agra supervised my research, and guided the progress of the thesis until it came in its final form. I am very much indebted to him for his constructive criticism, constant trust and his quality of exemplary patience.

The Librarians and Staff of the All India Congress Committee Office, New Delhi, the National Archives of India and other research centres have been helpful, and I thank them all specially Sri S. V. Desikachar—former Assistant Director and Sri B. M. Sankhdher in the National Archives. Above all I thank my wife who helped me in several ways in completing my research project.

*H. P. KAUSHIK*

Appendices giving authentic and reliable information relevant to the study of the British Committee and INDIA journal have been included, and are first presentation of the reliable documentary evidence pertaining to the British work of the Congress. Perhaps this will be of some value to the scholars working on the Indian National Congress and the Indian Freedom Movement.

In spite of the best possible care on my part it is likely that some errors might have crept in. I crave for the indulgence of the readers. If occasion arises for its second edition every effort will be made to eliminate these defects. Any suggestion from readers for its improvement and to make the work more useful and authentic will be appreciated greatly and entertained gratefully.

HIRISH P KULSHRA

## CONTENTS

1.	Winds of Change	...	1
2.	Sunrise	...	16
3.	The Struggle	...	32
4.	Agitation Intensified	...	57
5.	The Gathering Storm	...	83
6.	The British Response	...	104
7.	The Harvest	...	126
8.	Epilogue	...	151

## APPENDICES

I	Relevant information regarding the British Congress Committee (Unpublished).	...	...	(i)
II	The Journal—INDIA; Its editors and other relevant information.	...	...	(xix)
III	Resolutions of the Indian National Congress relating to its British work (1889-1920)	...	...	(xxvii)

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** ... .. (xxxv)

THE Indian National Congress was founded with the object of providing to Indians a Common platform to enable them to project from it their ideas and aspirations "in the cause of national progress" It was originally conceived as "the germ of Native Parliament" which was expected "to constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still unfit for any form of representative institutions"<sup>1</sup> But from the beginning the organisation was given a political orientation by its leaders who sought political progress of India through the actions of the constitutional rulers It was, therefore, called upon to demonstrate to the Government and people of England, the ultimate authority on Indian affairs, that the educated Indians were fit to have a share in the administration of their country Inspired by the democratic instincts and liberal ideas of the British, the leaders of the Congress felt that their work in India should be supplemented by a similar activity in England For this purpose they established an auxiliary organisation in England, and organised an elaborate propaganda by means of Press, Platform, Parliament and other Constitutional techniques

### The British Impact

The activities of the Congress were the culmination of the evolution of those political ideas and organisations which had come into being in the early 19th century as a result of the impact of the British influence It is generally acknowledged that among the several factors responsible for the development of political consciousness in India in the 19th century, the impact of the British ideas

1 The Manifesto issued in March 1885 to convene the first session of the Congress in December enumerated the objects of the movement These were elaborated in the speeches of the leaders at its first session Vide Report of the Indian National Congress 1885, PP 7 8

was far reaching.<sup>1</sup> With it, the political, economic and administrative conditions under British rule cooperated and they together gave powerful impetus to the development of political ideas and organisation on Western model. The British restored the contact of India with the outer world. They introduced Press, uniform system of administration, English education, modern means of Communication and transportation. Under the impact of these forces there was many sided development of Indian intellect. By far the most important force which transformed the mind of India was the English education. B. C. Pal observes: "with the revival of learning following upon the introduction of English education every department of our life found a rejuvenescence."<sup>2</sup> One of the important effect of English education was that it initiated Indians into the British liberalism from which politically-minded Indians of the 19th century derived their ideas of constitutional struggle and direct appeal to the British for the redress of their grievances.

The study of English literature instilled in Indians a faith in the democratic ideals of the British and inspired them to press upon the attention of the British the need of applying those ideals in India also. The ideas and passions of liberty of such immortals of English literature as Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley profoundly impressed them and inspired a belief in the British sense of justice and humanity. An interesting example of this tendency in the Indian thought of the 19th century is to be found in Tagore's writings. He wrote: "We had come to know England through her glorious literature which had brought a new inspiration into our young lives. The English authors, whose books and poems we studied were full of love for humanity, justice and freedom". He further said: "We felt its power in Wordsworth's sonnets about human liberty. We gloried it even in the immature productions of Shelley...." All this fired our youthful imagination. We believed with all our simple faith that even if we rebelled against foreign rule, we should have the sympathy of the West. We felt that England

1. Tara Chand: History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol. 2 (1967). PP. 170-171, P. 446.

Majumdar, R. C. : History of Freedom Movement in India, Vol: 1, P. 312.

Also Dodwell, H. H.: A Sketch of the History of India from 1358 to 1915, PP. 11-13.

2. Pal, B. C.: Memoirs of My Life and Times, Vol. 1, P. 258.



was on our side in wishing us to gain our freedom" He was so hopeful of the British mission to train Indians for self-government that he expressed the conviction "that the victor would of himself pave the path of freedom for the vanquished"<sup>1</sup> The ideas of such political thinkers as Thomas Paine, Edmund Burke, Hume, Macaulay, and J. S. Mill and others had also profound effect on Indians. They instilled in Indians a feeling of admiration for British sense of democracy and encouraged them to seek redress of their grievances from their British rulers. Paine's works attracted wide attention of Indians and deeply influenced their thought.<sup>2</sup> This was also true of Burke's teachings. His "Political Philosophy", says S. N. Banerjea, "has so largely moulded my own views about government and society"<sup>3</sup> Among other great political thinkers who influenced the Indian mind and thought were John Stuart Mill. J. S. Mill's ideas on utilitarianism, liberty and representative government were very popular with the educated Indians of the 19th century and he was the most quoted author in debates and political discussions.<sup>4</sup>

The study of British history, tradition and political institutions acquainted Indians with the British political system and the British methods of political struggle. They learnt how British liberalism had championed the cause of representative self-government and how the British had struggled against the tyranny of the despots and obtained political power. The early Indian leaders regarded England as "the home of constitutional liberties and the mother of Parliaments and free institutions".<sup>5</sup> These ideas of educated Indians were further stimulated by their association with such European teachers<sup>6</sup> as Henry Louis Vivian Derozio who taught English and History in Hindu College in the thirties of the 19th Century. He urged his students to think freely for themselves and through his teachings, the Hindu College students were initiated into radical views then prevalent in Europe particularly those of Bacon, Hume and Paine. Many of the contemporaries of Ram Mohan Roy were devout disciples of Derozio and shared with him his enthusiasm for

1 Tagore, Rabindranath 'A Retrospect' Indian Writing, PP. 187-188

2 Majumdar B. History of Indian Social and Political Ideas From Ram Mohan to Dayanand, P. 51

3 Banerjea, S. N. A Nation In Making, P. 132

4 Rao M. V. K. The Growth of Indian Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century, PP. 38-39

5 Ghose, Sankar. The Western Impact on Indian Politics, 1880-1919, P. 6

6 Lajpat Rai. Young India, P. 114

doctrines of natural rights and equality.<sup>1</sup> Hence as a result of the British impact there emerged in the early 19th Century a class of Indian intellectuals who were great admirers of British democratic institutions and way of life and who believed that British would surely redress Indian grievances if they are acquainted with them. They, therefore, resorted to the method of direct appeal to the British Parliament against the Government of India long before the Congress came into being in 1885.<sup>2</sup> Prominent representatives of this class of Indians were Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore and Dadabhai Naoroji.

### **Early Indian Nationalist Activity in England**

As a Benthamite in his political thinking,<sup>3</sup> a keen observer of the British methods of political agitation, Ram Mohan Roy showed the way of conducting political campaigns for redressing wrongs.<sup>4</sup> He first submitted memorials and petitions to the Parliament, setting forth the grievances of Indians, the shortcomings of the administration of the Company, and the suggestion for their removal. The petition submitted in 1827 has been generally referred to as the first authentic statement of Indian views on Indian affairs. His activities in England during 1830-1833 produced some effect and are said to have influenced some of the provisions of the Charter Act of 1833.<sup>5</sup> Next to Ram Mohan Roy was Dwarkanath Tagore—the grandfather of the poet Tagore, who took leading part in laying the foundation of Indian activity in England. He also submitted letters and petitions to the authorities in England acquainting them with true state of Indians under British rule.<sup>6</sup> During his visit to England in 1842 he delivered several lectures and sought to establish contact with the leading British public men in order to enlist their support for the Indian cause. He received sympathetic response and was welcomed in the British circles.<sup>7</sup> He was one of the

1. Majumdar, R. C. : History of Freedom Movement In India, Vol. I, PP. 324-25.

2. Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol. I 1818-1885, PP. 135-140.

3. Majumdar, B. : History of Indian Social and Political Ideas From Ram Mohan to Dayananda, P 27.

4. Tara Chand : History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol. II, P. 256.

5. Majumdar, R.C.: History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol.I, P.384

6. Majumdar, J. K.: Indian Speeches and Documents on British Rule, PP. 54-55.

7. Mitra. K. K. : Memoirs of Dwarkanath Tagore, PP. 88.

first Indians to demand the representation of India in British Parliament and suggested that each Presidency should be allowed to send two representatives. Later this demand was put forth by the Congress.<sup>1</sup> Both Ram Mohan Roy and Dwarkanath made efforts to make some permanent arrangement for propaganda in England on behalf of Indians. As a result of these efforts some of the representatives of the British opinion became interested in Indian affairs as for instance John Bright, Henry Fawcett, William Adams, George Thompson and Charles Bradlaugh. An interesting outcome of these activities was the foundation of the British India Society in 1839. William Adams, the friend of Ram Mohan Roy and George Thompson an associate of Tagore were its moving spirits. It was one of the earliest organisations in England formed "for improvement of the conditions of native population of India". Auxiliary societies were formed in many of the towns of England and Scotland. The agitation was promoted by means of speeches and writings. A journal was started by the Society for this purpose.<sup>2</sup> But the agitation did not acquire wide publicity.

Dadabhai Naoroji the Grand old Man of India was, however, the most distinguished of all the early Indian leaders to urge the value and importance of Indian nationalist activity in England. He made England the centre of his political activities. In cooperation with W C Bonnerjee, he started in 1865 in England an association known as the London India Society. The object of the Society was "the discussion of political, social and literary subjects relating to India with a view to promote the interest of the people of that country". Under the auspices of the society Indians and Englishmen discussed various matters concerning Indian administration.<sup>3</sup> A year after the society was amalgamated with another association known as East India Association. The new organisation was inaugurated on December 1, 1866. It worked well and soon became popular. A large number of distinguished Englishmen became associated with it. Its meetings were usually well attended. In these meetings Indian grievances were discussed and remedial measures were suggested. On 25th of July 1867 Bonnerjee delivered

1 The Friend of India March 16, 1843 vide B Majumdar History of Indian Social and Political Ideas From Ram Mohan To Dayanand P 82

2 Majumdar B B Indian Political Association and Reform of Legislature 1818 1917 P 27

3 Majumdar B B Indian Political Association and Reform of Legislature 1818 1917 PP. 93 102

an interesting lecture on "the Representative and Responsible Government in India" and suggested the framing of Indian constitution on the American model. The Association also published a Journal and sent a memorial to the Secretary of State for India praying that the examination of Civil Service should be held in India also. The East India Association was soon recognised as an important political organisation and its branches were formed in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1869. A pamphlet explaining, "The duties of the Local Indian associations in connection with London Association" was also issued. The membership of the Association rose to an appreciable extent by the year 1871. It also had some influence on the Members of the British Parliament. But it gradually lost its importance and was almost a dead body after 1884.<sup>1</sup> Another organisation interested in social and political work for India was the National Indian Association. It was founded in 1867 by Mary Carpenter, the biographer of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Its object was to promote social intercourse between Indians visiting England and English people. But it was not a political organisation and did not acquire importance.<sup>2</sup> A noteworthy effort in this direction was made by Anand Mohan Bose—a student of the Cambridge University. He founded in 1872 the Indian Society in London with the object of fostering the spirit of nationalism among the Indian residents in England. His activities aroused the British interest in Indian affairs. Commencing on one of his speeches a Member of the British Parliament is said to have observed that 'never in his life had he listened to a more eloquent description of the wrongs in India.' It is also interesting to note that his speech in the Cambridge University Union debate was mainly instrumental in carrying a motion regarding Indian affairs by 74 votes against 26. The subject proposed for the debate was that "In the opinion of the House England has failed in her duties to India."<sup>3</sup> Some rulers of Indian states organised in 1875 an association in London under the name of Constitutional Society of India. Its object was to "protect and promote the moral and material interests of India, to supply accurate information to the Parliament and to protect the rights of the people and the feudatories."<sup>4</sup> Both the Indians

1. Majumdar, B. C. : History of Freedom Movement, P. 485.

2. Modern Review, December 1948.

3. Majumdar, R. C. : History of Freedom Movement in India, P. 386.

4. Amrit Bazar Patrika dated 17th June 1875, quoted in Indian Political Associations, P. 1

and the British were its members. But the Society did not survive for long. In 1883 some young Indians studying in England started an association called the National Representative Committee in London. In its official prospectus the object of the Association was described as representing from Indian point of view the grievances of Indians to British public and more especially to the British Parliament with the ultimate object of seeking redress of these grievances. The Association proposed a *comprehensive scheme of agitation*. But no sustained efforts appear to have been made to carry out the scheme.<sup>1</sup>

The early Indian efforts to enlist the sympathy and support of the British people for the redress of Indian grievances did not, however, produce any tangible result. But as pioneering activities in promoting the cause of Indian nationalism in England they were the forerunners of a more active Indian agitation later organised by the Indian National Congress. Many of these early associations gave up their efforts to maintain separate existence after the Congress came into being.

### **Predecessors of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress**

Efforts to promote Indian agitation in England through an authorised agency to work on behalf of an Indian organisation were also made long before the establishment of British Committee of the Indian National Congress in 1889. Earlier than A. O. Hume who is generally regarded as the originator of the idea of the Congress Agency in England, it had struck to several Indian leaders that their agitational work in India should be supplemented by a similar activity in England. Foremost among them were Dwarkanath Tagore and Rada Kant Deb who founded Land Holders' Association of Bengal in 1838.<sup>2</sup> Fully aware of the benefits of a regular agitation in England by means of a permanent agency as was later emphasised by Hume, Dwarkanath Tagore conceived the idea of setting up a branch of the Association in England. At his instance the Association in its meeting of July 17, 1843 appointed George Thompson as a permanent Agent to work on its behalf in England. Thompson was a well known public man of England.

1 Majumdar B. B. *Indian Political Associations*, pp. 103-104.

2 Majumdar, B. P. and B. P. *Congress and Congressmen in the Pre-Gandhian Era (1885-1917)*, P. 149.

and was the president of British India Society in London. As such he served as a connecting link between the Society and the Association. He had been in India and was acquainted with Indian problems. He was assisted by a Committee in London appointed by the Land Holders' Association. This arrangement continued for some time and Thompson actively worked to bring to the notice of the British authorities the grievances of the Association. Available evidence shows that he also pleaded the cause of Emperor of Delhi for which he was paid a monthly honorarium of Rs, 10,000.<sup>1</sup> As such the London Agency of Land Holders' Association was a pioneering effort in the direction of a permanent arrangement for Indian propaganda in England. The idea of Indian agitation through an authorised Agency in England was also contemplated by the National Association formed on Sept. 14, 1851. Its object was to promote welfare of the Country by bringing to the notice of the authorities in India and in England, the need of reforms. This Association had a distinctive political outlook. Its leaders considered agitation in England equally as important as in India and for that purpose they resolved to appoint an Agent in England to act for the Association. A Resolution passed at one of its meetings said, "that we may have an agent in England to lay before the Imperial Parliament our wants and grievances when that question of the revision of the Charter Act comes for discussion before that body."<sup>2</sup> It was further proposed to raise funds by subscription to meet the expenses of such an agent. The idea was actively promoted when the Association was renamed as British Indian Association with a more ambitious programme. At the inaugural meeting of the association in October 1851 it was resolved to make "respectful but earnest representation to the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain to bring to its notice the reforms desired to remove defects in administration and to promote the general welfare and interest of the people". In accordance with this object the Association appointed an agency in England.<sup>3</sup> Its main function was to push forward in England the Indian cause advocated by the Association and to enlist the sympathy of the Parliament. Mr. Gordon was appointed first agent in 1852. He, however, died shortly after his

1. The Bengal Harukaru, August 11, 1843 quoted in Indian Political Associations, p. 31.

2. Majumdar, B. B. Indian Political Association, p. 35.

3. Ibid.

appointment. The second Agent was George Gordon Macpherson who had served in Bengal for 21 years and was well acquainted with Indian affairs. He did some fruitful work. He appeared before the select committee of the House of Commons in 1853 and represented the Association's views. The Agent continued to plead the cause of India and the records of the Association indicate that considerable amount was spent by the Association on its propaganda work in England. For instance it spent Rs 10,974-11-4 paise in 1852 and Rs 7,316-12-6 paise in 1853.<sup>1</sup> This precedence was continued by another organisation the Indian Association organised in 1876. The objects of the Association were similar to those of the Congress.<sup>2</sup> Its leaders had great faith in the British people and its emphasis on Indian propaganda in England foreshadowed the Congress agitation in England. In 1879 it appointed Sri Lal Mohan Ghose as its agent in England. He was entrusted with the work of enlisting the British sympathy in support of the Association's demand of raising the maximum age of the candidates for the Indian Civil Service. It is interesting to note that Lal Mohan Ghose was successful in his mission and aroused considerable interest in the British people in Indian affairs.<sup>3</sup> Impressed by this success the leaders of the Association in its meeting on 3rd September 1879 resolved to appoint a Permanent Committee. The Resolution said "that with a view to keep up and sustain the agitation which has already been commenced in England with reference to Indian questions and to place before the British public the views, sentiments and aspirations of the people of this country this meeting resolves to raise a fund for the establishment of a permanent deputation to England."<sup>4</sup> The same meeting empowered the Indian Association to take necessary measures to give effect to this resolution. S. N. Banerjee was entrusted with the work of appealing for funds. In his speeches he explained the advantages to be had by establishing a permanent Indian Agency in England.<sup>5</sup> Although the Indian Association did not succeed in its desired object yet it clearly foreshadowed the policy of the Congress in establishing its agency in England. It is also noteworthy that a few months before the foundation of the Congress the three Presidency Associations

1 Majumdar B. B. *Indian Political Associations* pp 46-48

2 Bagel J. C. *History of the Indian Association* pp 4-8

3 Banerjee S. N. *A Nation In Making* p 54

4 Majumdar B. B. *Indian Political Associations* p 148

5 See *Indian Political Associations* p 148

viz. the British Indian Association, Bombay Presidency Association and Madras Mahajan Sabha sent one delegate each to England for making propaganda to enlist British sympathy for Indian cause. These were Monomohan Ghose of Calcutta, N. G. Chanderavarkar of Bombay and Salem Rama Swami Mudaliar of Madras.<sup>1</sup> They spoke at several meetings and appealed to the British electors to take a pledge from the candidates to support some of the Indian demands.<sup>3</sup> These demands were more or less the same as those put forward by the Congress in 1885 and subsequently.

In view of this contemporary evidence it can be said that such an agitation as was initiated by the Indian National Congress by means of its Committee in England was not without precedence and that it was anticipated much before the inception of the Congress in 1885.

### **The British Impact on the Congress Leadership**

The founders of the Indian National Congress were also inspired by those British ideals which had shaped the political mind of their predecessors in the early 19th century. Like their predecessors they too felt the impact of such forces under British rule as internal peace and security, rapid means of communication, freedom of press and above all English education. To early Congressmen these forces embodied numerous possibilities for the growth of the nation. They, therefore, looked upon England as their "political guide" and "moral preceptor".<sup>1</sup> Congress itself was claimed by them as "the soundest triumph of British administration".<sup>2</sup> Their speeches and statements show that it was the British liberalism which prompted them to extend their activities to England.

The English educated class was the main force behind the Congress movement during its early phase. English was the language in which its leaders conducted the proceedings and disseminated their ideas. Many of its leaders had either received their education in England or had lived for long in England. More prominent among them were W. C. Bonnerjee, Pherozshah Mehta, S. N. Banerjea, Dadabhai Naoroji, and A. O. Hume. Consequently they

1. Mody, Homi : Sir Pherozshah Mehta-A Political Biography, p. 95.

2. India's Appeal to British Voter : Vide Briton, Martin Jr. New India, 1885—British Official Policy and the Emergence of the Indian National Congress, pp, 197-99.

3. Congress Presidential Addresses First Series, p. 252.

4. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1887, p. 1



imbibed the ideals of political liberalism and democracy as developed in England. In the very first Congress W. C. Bonnerjee, in his Presidential address declared that Indians wanted "to be governed according to the ideals of governments prevalent in Europe." He further said that in demanding a share in the administration of their country Congressmen were following the methods of British constitutional struggle which demanded political progress through the action of constitutional authorities.<sup>1</sup>

From their study of the constitutional history of England and the working of the political institutions in England the early Congressmen had learnt to appreciate the theory and value of representative institutions and the technique of constitutional struggle. They admired the democratic character of the British and believed that England would not withhold from India the inestimable blessings of representative institutions that she had evolved after a long struggle and already conceded to the self-governing colonies.<sup>2</sup> They vividly remembered how the English people extolled Hampden for his refusal to pay ship money, how at every stage of their constitutional history, Englishmen showed a zealous solicitude to ensure to their representatives alone the full and final control of the finances of their country and how a section of them migrating to America converted the principle of 'no taxation without representation' into a battle cry for revolution. Malviya said: "No taxation without representation that is the first commandment in the Englishmen's political bible, how can he palter with his conscience and tax us here, his free and educated fellow subjects. In this Congress and in it, and through it we call on England to be true to her traditions, her instincts and herself and grant us our rights as free born British citizens."<sup>3</sup> The belief of the Congressmen in the generosity of the British people was expressed by R. N. Mudholkar when he said, "In fact a more honest and sturdy nation does not exist under the sun than this English nation."<sup>4</sup> Early Congressmen were sure that through their constitutional agitation in England they would be able to secure sympathy and cooperation of British politicians in the work of Indian political reform. They were convinced that peaceful constitutional agitation had not failed. The British history was

1 Congress Presidential Addresses First Series, 1825-1910 p. 4

2 Speech of Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya at the 1887 Congress. The Hon. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya: His Life and Speeches (Madras 1910), p. 15

3 Report of the Indian National Congress 1889 p. 107

4 Majumdar, J. K., Speeches and Documents on British Rule, p. 147

a positive proof of the fact that reforms had been granted to the people by ceaseless criticism and persistent political pressure on the governing authorities. It was on account of his knowledge of British constitutional history that Hume advised the Congress leaders "to carry on agitation in England on the lines and in scale of that in virtue of which the anticorn Law League triumphed".<sup>1</sup> Dadabhai Naoroji also talked in the same view of thought when he encouraged the Congressmen to continue their struggle by comparing it to the English agitation against the corn laws and the struggle for Parliamentary Reforms.<sup>2</sup> Hence as the admirers of the English Parliamentary institutions and tactics of agitation promoters of the Congress movement in England believed that if they succeeded in arousing the sympathies of the English electorate, Englishmen with their power of vote would exert pressure on their elected representatives in Parliament to concede their demand. The majority of Congress leaders were either lawyers or men who studied law and coupled with their belief in the democratic and just instinct of the British people, they regarded England as the ultimate authority and their High Court of appeal. They, therefore, sought to convince the British of their just demands.<sup>3</sup> The implicit faith of the Congressmen in the efficacy of their method of direct appeal to the British was expressed by S. N. Banerjea when the Congress appointed its first delegation to England. He said, "I think this will be the realisation of one of the grandest ideals that ever flashed across the minds of any patriot or philanthropist, India standing before the bar of English public opinion and there through her accredited delegates chosen by the representative of the nation, pleading her cause and demanding redress of her grievances, no finer, no nobler, no grander spectacle has ever been presented to the gaze of mankind."<sup>4</sup>

Hence with so large a measure of driving force in the Congress leadership being drawn from the impact of British influence as described above and with the encouragement and guidance from such Englishmen as Hume, Wedderburn and Cotton it was natural that the leaders of the early Congress should have laid greater emphasis on their propagandist activities in England. It was, therefore, the basic assumption of the Congress leaders that in England Englishmen

1. Wedderburn-Allan Octavian Hume, p. 86.

2. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1893, p. 75.

3. Congress Presidential Addresses, Second Series, pp. 12-13.

4. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1889, p. 77.

would give a sympathetic hearing to their case and not the hostility of the officials in India that led them to extend their activities to England. The attitude of indifference of the bureaucracy was not the main cause as has been held in certain quarters. The indifferent and apathetic attitude of the bureaucracy in India provided an immediate incentive and opportunity to intensify the Congress agitation in England.

### Organisation of Congress propaganda in England

In fact the Congress leaders in the beginning wanted to work in harmony with the officials and sought their patronage. They proposed Lord Reay, the Governor of Bombay to preside over the first session of the Congress. But the Viceroy Lord Dufferin did not agree to the proposal and W. C. Bonnerjee was offered Presidentship.<sup>1</sup> Officials were invited to attend the sessions of the Congress and were given the place of honour on the platform of the Congress.

The official attitude in the beginning was also sympathetic. Lord Dufferin, the then Viceroy is said to have approved Hume's idea of starting Congress and to have advised him to widen the scope of the Congress so as to make it a national organisation.<sup>2</sup> In 1886 he entertained at a garden party the delegates of the Congress. His example was followed by Lord Connemara, the Governor of Madras when the third Congress was held in 1887 at Madras. But the year 1887 marked the end of friendly relations between the Congress and the Government. The Congress had by now acquired sufficient influence and popularity. It therefore, aroused suspicion of the officials. From 1887 onwards it encountered official opposition. The first sign of this opposition was a circular issued by the government forbidding officials to attend Congress meeting even as visitors. It prohibited government servants from collecting subscription for political purposes. Individual officers also placed obstructions to the activity of the Congress. As for instance, a District Officer called upon a gentleman to furnish a security of rupees twenty thousand to keep peace simply because he had attended the Congress Session of Madras in defiance of his wishes.<sup>3</sup> Lord Dufferin openly criticised the Congress. He denounced its claim to represent the masses and spoke of it as microscopic minority. Speaking about the demand

1 Singh Hira Lal *Problems & Policies of the British in India* p. 227

2 Bonnerjee W. C. *Introduction to Indian Politics* (1898) p. VII

3 *Department of Home (Public A) Proceedings* No. 16 Feb. 1902.

of the Congress he openly expressed the opinion that Congressmen were seeking "to sit in the chariot of sun by demanding Representative Government and enlargement of Councils and legislatures on elective basis."<sup>1</sup> The Congress consequently soon ceased to be patronised by those in authority and came under official criticism. Auckland Colvin—the Lt. Governor of N. W. P. who had, hitherto, been "distinctly friendly to Congress" became its critic.<sup>2</sup> His unfriendly attitude was specially noticeable when the Congress held its session of 1888 at Allahabad. The authorities were unwilling to grant as usual the facilities for holding the session. Detectives to watch the activities of the Congress leaders were deputed. This attitude of the officials annoyed the Congress leaders who openly expressed their dissatisfaction in strong language.<sup>3</sup> They now realised as never before that the real obstacle to their demand for political reform was the bureaucracy in India. Therefore they focussed their attention more on the agitational activity in England. They hoped to get the redress of their grievances by appealing direct to the British nation which was the ultimate judge of Indian questions. They felt that the work in England would be carried on in an atmosphere free from suspicion and fear. A leading Congressman observed in 1888: "Indian and English officials may violate my liberties and usurp my rights but I know that English opinion will ever be as it always has been on the side of justice and righteousness."<sup>3</sup> With these ideas uppermost in their mind the promoters of the Congress movement laid emphasis on vigorous activity in England. Hume, who is regarded as the father of the Congress generally, also took active initiative in organising Congress propaganda in England. He observed: "The educated men, the Press and the Congress have endeavoured to instruct the Government, but the Government like all autocratic governments has refused to be instructed and it will now be for us to instruct the great English nation in the island home and the far greater nation of this vast continent so that every Indian that breaths upon the sacred soil of this motherland may become our comarade and coadjutor, our supporter—in the great war that we like Cobden and his noble band

1. Speech of Lord Dufferin at St. Andrew's Dinner at Calcutta on November 30, 1888; vide A. C. Bannerjee, *Indian Constitutional Documents* Vol. II (1858-1917), pp. 94-96.

2. Report of the Indian National Congress 1888, p. 2.

3. Vide *Advocate*, June 19, 1888.

will wage for justice, for liberties and rights"<sup>1</sup> Soon after the inception of the Congress Hume went to England to consult his friends as to the best means of getting a hearing "for such an organisation both from the British Parliament and the Public" Among the persons whom he consulted were John Bright Lord Ripon and R. T. Reid known for their pro-Indian views The general opinion among these persons, was that 'vigorous propaganda must be kept throughout the country by means of public meetings lectures, pamphlets, articles in the press, and by securing the sympathy of local associations and of influential public men' In a letter to Hume, Reid who was a member of the Parliament gave some practical advice on coaching British members about Indian subjects and on securing a seat for an Indian in the House of Commons 'You must have coadjutors in Parliament', he said, for "if you have a few men like yourself busy in England they will find friends inside the House" Though there was a real desire in the country to act justly and generously as regards India, Members of Parliament, he said, "know nothing" regarding the problem<sup>2</sup> Encouraged by these suggestions, Hume repeatedly impressed upon the Congress leaders to organise an Indian body in India Dadabhai Naoroji, who had presided over the second session of the Congress in 1886 and was at that time residing in England, agreed to act as an agent of the Congress in England He was joined by Fardley Norton and W. C. Bonnerjee and the nucleus of the Congress Agency was formed in 1888 It developed into the British Committee in 1889 Thus organically linked up with the agitation launched by the Congress in India was the idea of propaganda in England

1 Wedderburn, William Allan Octavian Hume, p. 54

2 Wedderburn, William Allan Octavian Hume, p. 56

THE British Committee, established in 1889 as the official organ of the Indian National Congress, provided marked impetus to the activities of the Congress in England. Under the influence of its sustained political activity, a regular agitation on behalf of the Congress to secure British sympathy and support for its demands came into being. The inception of the Committee is generally associated with A. O. Hume, although it had its antecedents in the activities of several early leaders including Hume. There is a tendency among the scholars and writers of Indian National Movement to hold the view that Hume's pioneering efforts led to the establishment of the Agency of the Congress in England. Wedderburn first expressed this view, and those scholars, who have mainly relied on Wedderburn's opinion have continued in this notion. This, however, is not a correct view. In his statement of the origin and formation of the British Committee, Wedderburn has given distinct prominence to Hume's role. He has taken special notice of Hume's visit to England in 1885 and of his consultation with Reid, Bright, Ripon regarding the formation of an Indian political body in England to work for the cause of Indian reform. In Wedderburn's opinion these efforts of Hume led to the establishment of the British Committee. Several scholars have also maintained this view.<sup>1</sup> Wedderburn has not given due consideration to the work of William Digby and also of Dadabhai Naoroji who had played an equally important role in organising Indian Agency to keep Indian interest alive in England. Like Hume both of them had realised and felt importance of a regular organisation to

1. Wedderburn, W. : Allan Octavious Hume, 1913, p. 85. R.C. Majumdar has also referred that the British Committee came into being as a result of Hume's proposal of a scheme of Indian propaganda in England. "History of the Freedom Movement Vol. I, p. 415." Similar view has been taken by Dr. P.C. Ghose, "Development of Indian National Congress," 1892-1909. p. 12-13. Also see B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "History of the Indian National Congress."

advocate Indian demands in England. They were the driving force behind the associations which had as their object the advocacy of Indian Reform in England. They were the British Indian Committee formed in 1883, the Indian Reform Association organised in 1884-85, and the Indian Political Agency formed in 1887. These associations had preceded the British Committee.

In creating the precedence of the British Committee the role of Digby has yet not been properly brought to light and assessed. Much younger than Hume and a radical Liberal, Digby became interested in Indian affairs in the late 1870s when serving as the Editor of the *Madras Times*. Redress of Indian grievances and its importance for the English educated Indians was the chief focus of his activity. He was aspirant for Parliamentary seat as Liberal candidate during the elections of 1886. He had sufficient experience of Indian affairs and like Hume he realised that the question of Indian reform would be acted upon by the Indian Government only when it became a political issue in England. But whereas Hume had planned to leave the entire matter to important personalities such as Bright, Caird and Ripon, Digby sought to penetrate Indian issue in British politics and made an effort to bring Indian issue in election campaign. With this idea in his mind he had entered radical politics of Britain in 1880 after his return from India to England.<sup>1</sup> In a pamphlet written in 1881 on Indian Problem, he expressed the view and warned of "another strife-torn Ireland, if Parliament continued to ignore the aspirations and grievances of Indians." He urged the National Liberal Federation to make Indian Reform specially relating to the Legislative Councils, a major feature of the Liberal platform. His energetic efforts soon brought him to the forefront of the radical liberal ranks. He was also the Secretary to the British Indian Committee and Indian Reform Association. This gave him the opportunity to link Indian reform more firmly with the radical Liberal sympathisers of the Indian cause.<sup>2</sup> It was due to his initiative and inspiration that British Indian Committee and the Indian Reform Association made serious efforts to bring forward Indian question in the British politics. This became apparent in 1885 when a special meeting was arranged at the National Liberal Club in order to plan India's

1 Briton Martin Jr. *New India* 1885. *British Official Policy and the Emergence of the Indian National Congress* p. 224

2 Ibid.

appeal to the British Voter. Some of those present were Hume's friends. But all had been members of British Indian Committee and were then active in the Indian Reform Association.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that some of these members such as Dr. G. B. Clark,<sup>2</sup> Evans Bell, S. Keay and Martinword and others including Digby later became the organisers and active supporters of the British Committee. It can, therefore, be said that the activities of Digby and his friends were the forerunners of the British Committee and the agitation represented by them was later embodied in the work of the British Committee of the Congress.

### The Indian Political Agency

The Indian Political Agency, which came into being in 1887 constituted the immediate antecedent of the British Committee. William Digby, was its Secretary and occupied important position. But the Agency did not owe its origin to him as some have believed. Equally inaccurate is the information given in some of the recent studies that the Agency was started in 1888.<sup>3</sup> The Agency, in fact, had its beginning in the activities of Dadabhai Naoroji who had been the President of the Indian National Congress in 1886, and who had agreed to act as the official Agent to the Congress in England in 1887. None of the recent studies refers to the names of W. C. Bonnerjee and Dadabhai Naoroji, who were, in fact, closely associated with the foundation of the Agency. It is recorded in the Minutes of the Agency that 'the agency was established through the exertions of Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee aided by Dadabhai

1. Briton, Martin Jr ; New India 1885 - British Official Policy and the Emergence of the Indian National Congress, p. 224.

2. G. B. Clark was the member of the British Congress Committee since its inception and occupied the position of Chairman in 1918. Digby was the first Secretary of the British Congress Committee in 1889.

3. Singh, Hira Lal : Problems & Policies of the British in India 1885-1898, p. 219.

Majumdar, R. C. : History of the Freedom Movement Vol. I, 415.

Argove, Daniel : Moderates & Extremists in the Indian Nationalist Movement, p. 39.

These writers have mentioned 1888 as the date of the origin because it was actively organised in that year and was made known to the public.

In an article entitled—"The British Congress Committee"—A Retrospect, Modern Review Vol. XXV No.5, p. 529, accurate information is given. It mentions 1887 as the year of the inception of the Agency.



Naoroji and Eardley Norton <sup>1</sup> In 1887, Naoroji with the aid of his colleagues, did some useful work to enlighten the British opinion on Indian affairs by means of writings and personal contact <sup>2</sup> These activities formed the nucleus of the Indian Political Agency which later developed into the British Committee

The Indian Political Agency constituted with W S Carne as the Chairman and William Digby as the Secretary The members included W C Bonnerjee, Charles Bradlaugh Eardley Norton, William Wedderburn, Walter Bright, M C Laren and Dadabhai Naoroji Its Offices were housed at 25, Craven Street Strand London, which later became the Office of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress The Agency undertook 'all classes of political and social work on India' It sought to communicate all Indian grievances to the India Office or to the Parliament <sup>3</sup> A vigorous campaign was carried out in England by means of writings and speeches The Agency circulated a thousand copies of the Report of the Third Congress The Report was prefaced with the promises contained in the Acts of Parliament of 1833 and 1858 and in the Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858, and from the speeches of British officials The speeches of the leaders of the Congress were also circulated The circulatory literature also published the information contained in the resolutions of the Congress, and the constitutional nature of its movement etc British sympathy and co-operation was sought through these appeals 'We know that without your cooperation, we are quite helpless The only way to Indian reform runs through the British Parliament', urged a letter signed by W C Bonnerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji and Baduruddin J1 Tayeb Under the auspices of the Agency Mr Bonnerjee and Norton addressed a number of public meetings explaining the Indian stand and opinions on various problems Mr Bradlaugh who made a careful study of Indian affairs delivered many lectures on Indian questions in the different parts of England, and the British Parliament <sup>4</sup> During the seven months of its existence, the Agency spent nearly £1538 for the political propaganda in England on behalf of the Indian National Congress It included the payment for the public halls,

1 Vide Minutes of the Indian Political Agency, Meeting June 20 1889 (Vol June 20 1889 Oct 2 1890)

2 Life & Sketch of Dadabhai Naoroji—The Grand Old Man vide INDIA, July, 1917, p 6

3 INDIA Vol. I No I, February 1890, p 161

4 Wedderburn, W A O Hume p 87

advertisements, and other incidental expenses. For the current year i. e. 1889 the expenditure was estimated at £ 20,000 and this amount was to be collected by the Indian reformers themselves.<sup>1</sup>

A study of available contemporary evidence reveals an interesting aspect of the Agency not yet brought to light in recent studies. Although the Agency was a paid body of the Congress yet its work was of twofold character. In the first instance, it carried on propaganda work relating to the Congress and conducted under the instructions from the General Secretary in India or approved by Mr. Bonnerjee, Naoroji and Norton in England. This part of the Agency was known as the Indian National Congress Agency. Secondly the Agency also undertook the work relating to such Indian affairs in respect of which no instructions were received from the Congress, and the Congress was, in no way, responsible for it.<sup>2</sup> Thus it worked independently. Such work was undertaken by Digby 'on his own authority and in his private capacity'. The funds for this work were collected by William Digby himself and his other friends. Thus there were sections of the Indian Political Agency namely the Congress Agency and the Political Agency. They were later merged in the British Congress Committee, when it was regularly organised in 1889.

Although the Political Agency was a paid body of the Congress, yet it was not under the rigid control of the Congress. Nevertheless during the period of its existence in 1888, it proved a fruitful organ of the Congress propaganda in England. It was recognised as a centre of useful information on the grievances of Indian people, and every detail of Indian administration. Members of Parliament, publicists and others were enlightened on Indian affairs, and as such the Indian question was brought prominently before the British opinion. The efforts of the Indian Political Agency, thus, constituted the immediate antecedent of the British Committee.

### **The British Committee. Its Formation.**

The existence of the two sections of the Indian Political Agency was not viewed with favour by the leaders of the Congress movement in England. It was financed by the Congress, and was, therefore, expected to work for the Congress exclusively. The general

1. Vide Minutes of the Indian Political Agency, Meeting July 30, 1889.

2. Vide Minutes of the Indian Political Agency, Meeting July 30, 1889. Resolution V (A & B).

opinion was that the Agency should work fully for the Congress as its branch in England. It was, therefore, felt that separation between the two agencies namely the Political Agency and the Congress Agency be made and the latter be made solely responsible to the Congress.<sup>1</sup> This decision was taken in the second meeting of the Indian Political Agency in which Hume's proposal for the organisation of the Agency was considered. Hume had also urged the reorganisation of the Indian Political Agency as a paid body of the Congress solely devoted to the work of the Congress in England. In a letter dated June 5, 1889 addressed to the members of the Congress Agency, he suggested "a better and stranger" organization of the Political Agency, and as a General Secretary of the Congress, he empowered them "to do the needful". In another letter dated June 7, 1889, he again insisted on forming a Committee "composed of entirely of effectives, its object being that of 'bossing and guiding the policy of the Agency and to give assurance to our contributors here (India) that their money is being properly spent in England'". The meeting considered Hume's letter, and decided to set up a committee entirely devoted to the Congress work and responsible to the Congress. The meeting then resolved "That in accordance with the request of the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, the undersigned together with Mr Caine M P, agree to act as Provisional Committee to direct the work of the Congress agency in England and to sanction and audit its expenditure with powers to add to its number."<sup>2</sup>

The meeting further resolved "to ask the Indian National Congress to confirm these proceedings and to furnish the Committee with instructions as to the work they wish to be done in England". It was also decided that "the meetings of the Provisional Committee should be held from time to time, and a campaign of propaganda be undertaken."<sup>3</sup>

The members of this Provisional Committee were Messrs McLaren, Dadabhai Naoroji, William Wedderburn and W S Caine M P. Later other members were also added. William Digby asked

1 Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting July 27 1889 Vol June 20 1889 October 2 1890

2 They included McLaren D Naoroji and W Wedderburn

Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting July 27 1889 Resolution I

3 Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting July 27 1889 Resolutions III & IV

to continue to act as the Secretary and William Wedderburn as the Chairman of the newly formed body. This arrangement was confirmed in the meeting of the Committee on July 30, 1889. Thus in July 1889, the Indian Political Agency in London developed into a Provisional Committee of the Indian National Congress known as the Indian National Congress Agency Committee.<sup>1</sup> But it was a year after in 1890 that it was designated as the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. In its annual session of 1889, the Congress passed a resolution confirming the appointment of the Provisional Committee. The Resolution said: "That this Congress does hereby confirm the appointment of Sir William Wedderburn Bart, and Messrs: W. S. Caine M. P., W. S. Bright, Mc. Laren, M. P., J. W. Ellis, M. P., Dadabhai Naoroji and George Yulu as a Committee (with power to add to their number) to guide and control the expenditure of the National Congress Agency in England, and does further tender its sincere thanks to these gentlemen, and to Mr. W. Digby C. I. E., the Secretary for the service they are rendering."<sup>2</sup>

In his Presidential address at Bombay, Sir William Wedderburn felicitated the Congress in establishing its Agency in London. He explained its utility thus: "In the Indian National Congress, the people of India, hitherto dumb, have found a voice. But the distance to England is great, and the Agency is needed like a telephone, to carry the voice of the people of India to the ears of the people of England. It seems to me that the Agency under your indefatigable Secretary, Mr. William Digby is simply invaluable in bringing India in contact with her friends in England, and in bringing India in briefing those friends when they take up Indian subjects either in Parliament or before the public. Also the Agency, with the Committee which supervises its working will, we hope, be the nucleus round which an Indian party will gradually gather itself."<sup>3</sup>

The British Committee began as a branch organisation of the

1. Minutes of the British Congress Committee First Meeting July 30, 1889.

For the first time the Congress referred the name 'British Congress Committee' in its resolution of 6th Session 1890, Resolution No. XIII, p. 90, Vide Report of the Indian National Congress.

2. Report of the Indian National Congress 5th Session 1889, Resolution XIII (d), p. 83.

3. Congress Presidential Address 1889, p. 63.

Congress in England Its status was recognised by the Congress in its official proceedings The Committee had no constitution in the begining Its policy and programme was guided by the instructions of the Congress conveyed to it through its General Secretary The Congress also authorised the Committee to add members and to frame its rules Under this authority, the Committee was reorganised itself and new members were added In 1908 when the constitution of the Indian National Congress was framed, the Committee was incorporated in the constitution as a component part of the Congress It was accorded a status at par with all India Congress Committee and Provincial Congress Committees The British Congress was also given the right of electing delegates to the Indian National Congress It was also provided in the constitution that "the reception committee of the provinces in which the congress is held shall remit to the British Committee of the Congress through General Secretary of the Congress half of the amount of the fees received by it from the delegates" <sup>1</sup>

The British Committee was significantly reorganised in 1913 The Committee had not kept pace with the advanced programme of the Congress during the days of Home Rule agitation Its influence in England had also begun to decline as is reported in an official report <sup>2</sup> Consequently Tilak during his visit to England in 1918 made serious efforts to reorganise the committee and to make it an effective organ of Congress in England The personnel of the Committee was changed A sub-committee with N C Kelkar as its Convener was formed to arrange for propaganda It is noteworthy that a constitution of the Committee was now framed It was adopted in its meeting of July 25, 1919

## Office

The British Committee maintained a well furnished office to supervise and coordinate its propagandist activity At first the Committee utilised the room of the Indian Political Agency at 25 Craven Street Charing Cross London for its organisational and

1 Constitution of the Indian National Congress 1908 Article IV (g) Article XX (1) & Article XXVIII

2 Vide Dep't of Home (Pol Depost) Progs 202 of November 1918 (Confidential)

secretarial work.<sup>1</sup> It was a single room accommodation and was insufficient for the expanding activities of the Committee. Therefore a suitable accommodation was searched, and the office was, consequently, shifted to Rooms No. 84 & 85 Chambers Westminster opposite House of Commons.\* The rooms were suitably furnished. The walls were decorated with the portraits of the prominent Congress leaders with a view to give it a look of office of the official organisation of the Congress. A library containing literature on India was also set up in the office. Most of the contributions to the Library were from Dadabhai Naoroji.<sup>2</sup>

The organisational and secretarial work was supervised by Executive which consisted of the Chairman, the Secretary and some members.<sup>3</sup> There was no fixed term of the office of the Chairman and the Secretary of the Committee. The chief function of the Chairman was to preside over the meetings. He also handled correspondence, and held interviews with prominent leaders and publicmen of England. He had also the authority to release press statements. Sir William Wedderburn held this office from 1889 to 1918. It must, however, be said to the credit of Wedderburn that he guided the deliberations and activities of the British Committee very carefully and ably during the tenure of his office. He was succeeded by Gavian Brown Clark, an oldest member of the Committee, who equally played an important role in guiding and presiding over the activities of the Committee.<sup>4</sup>

The office of the Secretary was more important. He was the custodian of all records. He transacted business and maintained the continuity of the work. He carried on correspondence on behalf of the committee, and coordinated its propagandist activities. He also prepared and circulated the agenda. The issues were decided by majority of votes. But it is noteworthy that unanimity prevailed among the members generally. A study of the proceedings clearly

1. Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee, Vol. June 20, 1889—Oct. 2, 1890.

\* For one year in 1892, the officers of the British Congress Committee were shifted to Trafalgar Buildings I, Northumberland Avenue London temporarily. Similarly in 1919, its offices were taken to 161-163 Chambers, Temple Avenue, London.

2. Wedderburn, William : A.O. Hume, p. 88.

3. There was no fixed number of members. The Committee had the power to add as many members as it deemed proper.

4. Minutes of the British Congress Committee, Vol. Nov. 30, 1909—Dec. 10, 1919.

shows numerous instances of unanimous decisions<sup>1</sup> Proceedings were recorded and a Minutes Book<sup>2</sup> was maintained In addition to the work of transacting official business, the office also served as an agency of coordination and a centre of information pertaining to the Indian affairs It thus, became a permanent centre of the activities of the Congress in England The establishment of a regular office gave to the Committee the shape of a definite political movement in England on behalf of the Congress

### Membership

There were no definite rules for membership of the Committee It was regulated according to convenience The Committee, therefore, evolved its own rules regarding membership It is, however, noteworthy that its membership was not confined to the members of the Indian National Congress only It was open to all those who were interested in Indian affairs, and were in sympathy with the cause of Indian reform advocated by the Congress A study of the proceedings of the Committee reveals three categories of the membership The first category included those members who were associated with the inception of the Committee, and were known as original members They were permanent members and exercised great influence Most of them had long experience in Indian affairs and had been for long in India They were, for instance, William Wedderburn, A C Hume, Dadabhai Naoroji and Henry Cotton The second category consisted of those members who were elected by the Congress at its each session They were five in number In the third category, it included those members who were designated as temporary members of the Committee There was also a practice to elect temporary members of the Committee from among the leading members of the Congress, who happened to be in England As for instance Lala Lajpat Rai and G K Gokhale were elected as members of the Committee during their

1 Minutes of the British Congress Committee, Vol June 24 1890 (Vol June 1889 1890 Oct.) March 30 May 4 and June 30 1897 (election of visiting members) Vol Jan 1897 March 1900) and Nov 5 1907 (Election of Dr Rutherford M P to be the delegate of the Committee to the Congress in India) Vol July 1904-Oct, 1909

2 The only copy of this Document is preserved in its original form in the All India Congress Committee Library New Delhi It is a valuable source for the study of activities of the Indian National Congress in England

visits to England in 1905.<sup>1</sup> The temporary members also included such members of the Parliament and other leading representatives of the British opinion who supported the cause of the Congress, for example Herbert Paul, Hart Davies, Keir Hardie, Dr. Rutherford, Col. Wedgewood, Martinwood, Ben Spoor, Holford Knight etc. This practice added considerably to the influence and strength of the Committee.

### Finances

The Committee had its own funds to finance its activities and a regular account was maintained. Income and expenditure were recorded. There were several sources of its finances. The assistance from the Indian National Congress was the main and foremost source of its income. The Congress had contributed enormously towards the expenses of the Committee since its inception. Each year a sum of nearly half lakh of rupees was sent over to England to meet the expenses. The Indian National Congress maintained a 'Permanent Fund', and Rs. 3,000 was allotted to the English work from this fund.<sup>2</sup> However, the Congress intended to raise the amount to 200,000 per year for this purpose as was disclosed by Hume in a letter dated 9th April, 1893 addressed to the Editor of 'Manchester Guardian'.<sup>3</sup> In 1819, the Congress assigned a sum of Rs. 45,000 for the maintenance of the Committee in England. Thereafter the Congress granted money to the Committee regularly.<sup>4</sup> Apart from the regular grant, the Congress contributed to its British Committee from the delegation fee received by it in every session. It is noteworthy that the Congress in its beginning contributed liberally towards the expenses of the propagandist work of the British Congress Committee.<sup>5</sup> It is not generally known that the

1. Minutes of the British Congress Committee, October 24, 1905 (Vol. July 1904-Oct. 1909).

2. Report of the Indian National Congress, Calcutta Session 1890, Res.XIII, p. 90.

3. INDIA Vol. II, No. 20, May 1, 1893, p. 132,

4. Dep'tt. of Home (Public-A) 293-299, proceedings 272-275 of January, 1890-Congress Resolution XIII ( f ) Rs.40,000 (1890-1891), from 1898 to 1893 the grant amounted to Rs.68,000 per year, Rs.58,000 in 1899; but this grant was reduced in the successive years. It was Rs.30,000 in 1900, Rs.10,500 in 1903 and £ 700 in 1904.

5. In 1901, the Indian National Congress imposed a special delegation fee of Rs.10 vide Dep'tt. of Home (Pol. A) Progs. 55-58 of April, 1902 Congress Resolutions, Calcutta Session 1901, Resolution II.



expenses of the Congress in India were small in comparison to those incurred on propaganda in England. Vir Raghava Charya mentioned in 1888 that the cost of the First Congress was Rs 3,000, that of the Second Congress in Calcutta was Rs 16,000<sup>1</sup>. The sum of Rs 16,000, was sanctioned in 1891 to cover establishment charges, stationary, postage etc. of the Congress Office in India for the next year. C W Bolton, who was the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal in 1896, wrote to Hamilton the Secretary of the State on 18th July 1899 that the British Committee in London were promised Rs 8,000 annually from the Calcutta Standing Committee<sup>2</sup>.

In addition to the Congress contribution, the Committee also received general financial help through the efforts of leading Congressmen. Contemporary evidence contained in the Private Papers of the leaders reveals that leaders like Gokhale and Wacha worked incessantly to keep the Committee in good financial condition. For the purpose they worked hard and collected funds<sup>3</sup>.

Another source of its income consisted of the donations and contributions from individuals. The Committee appealed for donations from generous people both in India and England. These donations were to be sent to the General Secretary of the Congress, the Standing Committee of the Circle or directly to the Secretary of the British Committee<sup>4</sup>. An interesting example of donations for the Congress work in England is afforded by the Bombay session of the Congress in 1889. When the resolution for granting money to the British Committee was proposed several delegates including Norton offered money. A Punjab representative with a bundle of rupees in his hands came forward and said: 'Mr President, first take the money, and then put the resolution on record'. Another exciting example is of a poor Faquir, who stepped down to the platform, took off his cloak, laid it on the table and went back to his seat. A delegate came forward and offered Rs 500 for the cloak. Before this Resolution could be put on record, Rs 65,000 were coll-

1 The Indian National Congress Its Origin, History, Constitution, and Objects (Madras 1888)

2 Hamilton Collection (Private Correspondence) India Pt II Vols XIII, XIV XV & XVI, Microfilm Reel 8 ETR MSS Collection, Note of Bolton

3 Gokhale Papers, File No 569 Pt I (Wacha letters) Wacha to Gokhale August 29, 1896

4 Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting July 27, 1889, (Vol June, 1889 Oct 1890)

ected.<sup>1</sup> Some of the donations are noteworthy. The Youngmen's Association of London sent a sum of Rs.50 as donation.<sup>2</sup> An Indian sympathiser of the British Committee who did not like to disclose his identity sent a Bank Draft of Rs. 8,000 in 1894.<sup>3</sup> Noteworthy were the contributions from such Indians as the ruling chiefs and the business magnates. Among them were Maharajas of Darbhanga, Vijayanagaram, Gaekwad and J. N. Tata—an industrialist. It is interesting to note that the Government was very much anxious to conduct secret investigations of this source of income and Hamilton's correspondence with Indian Government during 1885-1899 reveals an interesting result.<sup>4</sup>

The sale proceeds of India, the official press organ of the committee constituted another source of income of the Committee. The copies of 'India' were sold at a rate of Rs. 8 annually, and the amount collected from this subscription was significant. The paper was largely subscribed in India. In 1907, Maharaja Gaekwad subscribed for 120 copies for the wide circulation and distribution.<sup>5</sup>

The fourth source of the income of the committee was the money spent by some leaders from their own pockets. Dadabhai Naoroji, Hume and Wedderburn are specially to be remembered for their generous and personal contributions. Wedderburn gave to the Committee his annual pension of Rs. 1000. Naoroji paid Rs.1000 towards the expenses in 1888, and contributed liberally whenever the Committee was in financial crisis. A memorandum of the

1. INDIA Vol. I, February, 1890, p. 2.

2. Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting, January 9, 1894. (Vol. Jan. 2, 1894-Dec. 1, 1896)

3. Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting, February 6, 1894 (Vol. Jan. 2, 1894-Dec. 1, 1896).

4. The Maharaja of Darbhanga and Raja of Gaekwad each contributed in 1892 a sum of rupees 5,000 and in 1893 a sum of rupees 8,000. The Raja of Vijayanagaram contributed a sum of rupees 5,000 in 1890, while the contribution of Maharaja of Gaekwad amounted to Rs. 1,000 in 1892. Vide Hamilton Collection, reel 8, Curzon's letter to Hamilton July 18, 1899. Raja of Ramnad and J.N. Tata made similar contributions to the funds of the British Congress Committee each paying Rs.1,003 and Rs.1,000. Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting Feb. 11 & 19, 1895 (Vol. June 1894-Dec. 1895) Hamilton Collection: Note of C. S. Bayley, June, 18, 1899. Encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton, June 28, 1899.

5. Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting April 30, 1907 (Vol. July 27, 1904-Oct. 20, 1909).

British Committee appreciably records the financial assistance of W C Bonnerjee and A O Hume <sup>1</sup>

### Policy and Programme

A vigorous and sustained propaganda with a view to securing British sympathy and support for the demands of the Congress formed the main plank of the programme of the Committee. The Committee looked to the Congress in India for guidance in its agitational work in England. The Indian National Congress through its Secretary Hume suggested the programme of action immediately after the inception of the Committee in July, 1889. Hume's letter dated September 15, contained certain directions regarding the programme of activity to be undertaken by the Committee. In accordance with these instructions, the Committee resolved to adopt the following programme

(i) "To arrange for the printing and issuing of the Report of the Indian National Congress annually in England and to undertake all the duties connected with the circulation of the Report, pressing it upon the attention of the publicmen answering the objections raised in Newspapers or otherwise where such a course is practicable or permitted, and the like

(ii) To urge forward Parliamentary action likely to advance the legislative enactment of the Congress Reforms by communicating with leading statesmen, corresponding with publicmen and in such other ways as may offer

(iii) To address the Secretary of State for India, whenever it may seem advisable upon matters connected with the Congress proposals

(iv) To conduct all correspondence whether in England, or with the leaders of the Congress in India, arising out of the Congress propaganda

(v) To arrange for meetings in London, and the U K generally whenever and wherever possible to urge the adoption of the Reforms advocated by the Congress and to distribute literature of all kinds bearing upon such Indian Reforms, where available

(vi) To communicate with such political organizations as the National Reform Union, and to make use of the machinery of such

1 Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting February 12 1918 (Vol November 30 1909 December 10 1919) Memorandum of the Committee on Finances of the Organization

organizations where it is offered or permitted for Congress propaganda work; and

(vii) Generally to take all practical measures to obtain the reforms and redress of grievances desired by the Congress."<sup>1</sup>

On these lines the Committee organised an elaborate propaganda. This propaganda was mainly confined to political questions. It sought to enlighten the British opinion on Indian affairs. It further attempted to educate and familiarise the British people with the ideals of the Congress and its demands, to press upon the attention of the British people and Parliament of the urgency of the Reforms advocated by the Congress. Impressed by the Committee's work the Congress suggested to the Committee in 1891 to widen its scope of its activities. In one of its Resolutions, the Congress urged the Committee : "to widen henceforth the sphere of their usefulness, by interesting themselves, not only in those questions dealt with by the Congress here, but in all Indian matters, submitted to them, and properly vouched for, in which any principle accepted by the Congress is involved."<sup>2</sup>

The Committee henceforth took interest in Indian matters other than political. For instance in 1892 it sent a memorial to the Secretary of State for India for supplying adequate funds for female education in India, and specially for Poona Girls High School. It is interesting to note that the Committee succeeded in pursuing Lord Ripon and eminent indologists Max Muller, Monier Williams.<sup>3</sup> Since 1892 it had been the policy of the British Committee to represent the political aspirations of the Indian National Congress in England, and to acquaint the British public and Parliament with the Indian problems arising from time to time. As a result of these activities, rightly, observed D.K. Wacha, "the organisation renders valuable services to Indian cause in England."<sup>4</sup>

The British Committee as an official organ of the Congress in England occupied a significant position. It had come out of the earnest efforts of those who were mainly responsible for the forma-

1. Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting July 30, 1889 (Vol. June 1889—October 1890).

2. Vide Report of the Indian National Congress 7th Session at Nagpur, 1891 Resolution VI, p. 62.

3. Vide INDIA, 1893, p. 11.

4. In course of an article contributed by D. E. Wacha on the Congress to the Indian Year Book, a particular reference was made to the types of services rendered by the British Committee : vide Indian Year Book, 1915. p. 452-53

tion of the Congress itself. The British Committee, therefore, enjoyed a great prestige—a prestige that placed above control or even criticism in India in its vital spark.

The establishment of the British Committee was indeed a very important political event. It was through this Committee that a sustained propaganda on behalf of the Congress was organised and pushed forward in England to seek redress of Indian grievances. As such the British Committee not only marked a significant landmark in the evolution of Congress politics but also became an important factor in determining relations between India and England.

IN extending their activities to England, the object of the promoters of the Congress movement was to win British sympathy in support of their demand. They, therefore, sought to organise an elaborate and vigorous campaign of propaganda, to educate the British people and the Parliament with a view to impress upon them the need of reforms in India'.<sup>1</sup> The promoters of the Congress, therefore, considered it essential for the success of its work to establish a branch in England acting in concert and in cooperation with it.<sup>2</sup> Hence the British Committee was established. In cooperation with this Committee the pioneers of the Congress movement sought to achieve their object by means of constitutional and law-abiding agitation. This method of agitation was stressed in the speeches of the Congress leaders,<sup>3</sup> and was laid down in the rules of the British Committee.<sup>4</sup>

This technique was adopted by the leaders of the Congress after due consideration. They were well acquainted with the British political behaviour and the British attitude towards political agitation. The British were averse to violent methods of agitation and they regarded the peaceful and law-abiding activity as the legitimate method of political struggle. The leaders of the Congress, having been influenced and inspired by the political liberalism of British people, and advised by the British supporters of the Congress, had realised that India's cause could be successfully propagated in England by conventional methods of propaganda.<sup>5</sup> Hence they sought to

1. Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee, Meeting July 30, 1889, Vol. June 20, 1882—Oct. 2, 1890.

2. Vide Report of the Indian National Congress, 1889 Resolution XIII.

3. Congress Presidential Addresses, Vol. II, P. 63.

4. Minutes of the British Congress Committee, Meeting July 30, 1889, Vol. June 20, 1889—October 2, 1890.

5. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1889, Presidential Address by Sir William Wedderburn, P. 48-49.

promote political activity by means of such constitutional agencies of propaganda as the Press, the Platform and the Parliament. Other devices, used by the leaders of the British Committee, included such activities as personal contact and deputations.

### The Press

The constitutional agitation, initiated by the Congress through its London branch in support of its demands was largely pushed forward through the medium of Press. It was the declared, and accepted technique of the Congress, and was more appealing to the British. Hume and Wedderburn—the chief protagonists of the Congress movement in England—were well acquainted with the power and influence exercised by the Press in the British politics.<sup>1</sup> They, therefore, laid great stress on a vigorous press activity, and under their influence and guidance, it became the chief vehicle of Indian agitation in England. This activity included chiefly the publication of a journal entitled *INDIA*, and circulation of political literature published in the form of pamphlets, books etc. “*India*” was edited by eminent and influential persons having intimate knowledge of India and her problems. Its main features were discussions on Indian affairs, information regarding the programme and proceedings of the Congress, letters and articles on Indian problems. It was a very significant and useful activity of the British Committee of the Congress. A systematic study of this activity has not been hitherto undertaken by the writers and the research scholars of the Indian National Movement. The information on the Journal available in several recent studies is not only insufficient but inaccurate also. Hence for the sake of convenience, this activity has been discussed separately following this chapter. Other relevant information is given in Appendix No. II.

In addition to the journal, the British Committee also pushed forward its propaganda by means of circulation of political literature. This literature consisted of pamphlets, booklets and reprints of the annual proceedings of the Congress. William Digby,<sup>2</sup> the first Secretary of the British Committee, produced a number of pamphlets and leaflets giving to the British an authentic information about India. Notable among such pamphlets were ‘Queen

1 Wedderburn Sir William Allan Octavian Hume p. 96

2 Digby drew £500 a year for acting as the Secretary of the British Committee and £100 a year for editing the journal *INDIA* during his association with the Committee.

Empress's Promises and How They Are Broken' and 'India for India and England'. Equally interesting was the political literature produced in the form of books by William Digby, Dadabhai Naoroji, R. C. Dutt and Henry Cotton.<sup>1</sup> These books evoked a considerable interest on Indian affairs. Dadabhai's book 'Poverty & Un British Rule in India' became an oft quoted authority on Indian affairs. The circulation of political literature became a prominent activity of the Committee during the days of Home Rule agitation and the demand for responsible Government was vigorously put forward.<sup>2</sup> In order to propagate India's cause of representative government the British Committee also issued circulars to political parties and prominent political associations in England. These circulars sought for an expression of British sympathy and assistance to the Congress demand of council reform. In these circulars, the Committee emphasised that the question of reform of Legislative Council be discussed on its merits and not be made an issue of a game of a party.<sup>3</sup> The circulatory literature also included the annual proceedings of the Indian National Congress. They were prefaced by such promises of reform as were given in the official statements regarding the progress and welfare of India under British rule. Excerpts from the speeches of the Presidents and prominent Congressmen appealing to the British for the redress of the grievances were also appended with these proceedings. For instance in 1890, 10,000 copies of the Report of the third congress were circulated.

### The Platform

The Platform was another important medium of propaganda adopted by the leaders of the Congress in England to propagate the demands of the Congress. Dissemination of political ideas by means of spoken words has been always regarded as a legitimate technique of propaganda by the British. Hence the Congress leaders in England also laid emphasis on platform activity as an agency of publicity. Alfred Webb, in one of his letters, emphatically asserted, "If anything could move the British electorate on the subject of India, it would be speeches and personal influence of Indian lea-

1. Digby's 'prosperous British India' (1901), Dadabhai's 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India' (1901), R. C. Dutt's 'Economic History of India under Early British Rule' (1902), and Henry Cotton's 'New India' (1907) contain useful information on Indian Conditions under British rule.

2. Report of the British Congress Committee, 1917-1918, p. 4.

3. Minutes of the British Congress Committee, October 2, 1890.



ders"<sup>1</sup> Therefore platform activity figured prominently in the work of the British Committee. The Committee organised public meeting in big towns. These places included South Lambeth, Sunderland, Edinburgh, Yorkshire, Liverpool and Manchester. It is recorded in the minutes of the British Committee that by the end of 1899 one hundred and thirty public meetings were held.<sup>2</sup> The speeches delivered in these meetings covered a wide range of subjects pertaining to the Indian problems, as for instance problem of Legislative Council's reform, economic depression and drain of wealth from the country, taxation wastage on military etc. But the question of Council reform, Indianisation of Civil Services and the solution of economic problems were considered important and figured prominently in the speeches. Care was also taken by the speakers to explain the national character of the Congress, and its claim to demand for reform of administration. The speakers were well known leaders of public opinion in India as well as in England. In 1897, G. K. Gokhale, S. N. Banerjea, D. E. Wacha and G. S. Iyer who had gone to England to give evidence before the Welby Commission addressed a large number of meetings. In 1898, Anand Mohan Bose, who had presided over the Session of the Congress that year, and W. C. Bonnerjee the first President of the Indian National Congress, spoke at various meetings. In January 1899, B. C. Pal addressed a series of meetings in Scotland. But the most important was a debate at the Oxford Union on May 22, 1890, where Eardley Norton a member of the Congress deputation in England (1890), moved a resolution regretting 'the non recognition of the elective principle in the bill' then before the Parliament. Moving the resolution he placed the Indian cause before the British audience and advocated the demand of including Indians in their own administration. He pleaded "they (Indians) were sentiment humanbeing, not serfs. the people had absolutely disfranchised. In the collection of taxes, they had no voice, in its expenditure no share. what they require was simply consultative voice before those laws which they were called upon luckily."<sup>3</sup> Gokhale's speech evoked considerable interest on Indian matters. His speech at Manchester and Salford Trade and Labour Council gave authentic information on India's condition under British rule.

1 Alfred Webb to Gokhale October 23 1900 Gokhale Papers

2 Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee, meeting October 3, 1899 Vol. January 5, 1897 March 27, 1900

3 Vide INDIA Vol. I June 6 1890 p. 147

"The present form of Government", he said, "was a bureaucracy, a monopoly of power in the hands of English officials. After the large expenditure on army, on the official salaries and other costs of administration, there was very little left for the people.<sup>1</sup> More interesting and convincing was his knowledge of statistics as to the material condition of the people. He observed that the average income in India was, according to the official calculation, £ 1 per head. He also drew the attention of the British audience to the increasing death rate from famine, from 20 per thousand to 34 thousand in twenty years. "The root of the evil", he added, "was the absence of any control."<sup>2</sup> The Congress took special interest in promoting the platform activity as one of the important planks of its programme. It is interesting to note that the Congress in its session of 1899 appointed an agency in England 'for the purpose of organising in concert with the British Congress Committee' public meetings for the dissemination of information on Indian matters.<sup>3</sup> For this purpose, it subscribed Rs.3,000 at its Lahore Session of 1900.<sup>4</sup>

The platform activity was more vigorous at the time of visit of delegations from India, at the time of elections in England and when some bill for reform was under discussion in the Parliament. On such occasions the British Committee organised public meetings. In these meetings, appeals were made to all sections of British opinion to support the cause of reform advocated by the Congress.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence of this activity, the Congress leaders in England were able to rally the support of prominent British leaders. In one of the public meetings, convened by the British Committee, Mc Carthy—a liberal member of the Parliament strongly advocated India's case. He said : "We feel, it is wholly impossible and utterly absurd to dream of governing a country like India forever by sword, to dream of keeping a country with such a population in a condition of perpetual infancy. Therefore, we wish that if we are to maintain our Indian Empire, it must be by free consent, and cooperation of people of India."<sup>6</sup> Encouraged by such British

1. Department of Home (Public-Deposit) Proceedings, 29th of February 1906 (Confidential) His speech was reported in INDIA November 24, 1905, p. 46.

2. Ibid

3. Report of the Indian National Congress 15th Session, Lucknow, 1899, Resolution XXII, p. 104-6.

4. Report of the Indian National Congress 16th Session, Lahore, 1909. Resolution XVII, p. 16.

5. Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting October 2, 1890. Vide INDIA, April 26, 1890, p. 98.

support, Bishan Narayan Dhar hopefully wrote "There is not a single town of importance in Great Britain where the name of the Congress is not known" "It is due", he further observed, "to great public meetings which have been held in London and other towns"<sup>1</sup>

Redress of grievances formed the main contents of the speeches. Such incidents as the partition of Bengal were also brought to the notice of the British public<sup>2</sup>. The speakers sought to convince the English audience that with the prevailing system of administration in India, the interest of Indian subjects and that of British rulers could not be identified at all. In one of the public meetings held at the Town Hall London on May 27, 1905 Sir William Wedderburn said: 'the primary interest of the people is peace, economy and the reform, which means for them freedom from the waste of militarism, reduction of taxation, and redress of grievances'. He, therefore, urged the introduction of representative form of Government in India as the solution of Indian political problem<sup>3</sup>.

The platform activity of the British Committee was actively organised during the course of first world war, and a vigorous propaganda was carried on by the British Committee by means of public meetings. The Committee also associated itself with other Indian organisations in England in the holding of public meetings<sup>4</sup>. In a Joint Conference of these organisations "a Consultative Committee for the purpose of taking concerted action in the advocacy of Indian demand for self government was appointed. It was composed of "one member from the British Committee of the Congress, Home Rule League, United India Society, Britain and India Association with Mr Isphani representing Moslim views respectively"<sup>5</sup>. A series of lectures were arranged. The first meeting was held on April 29, 1918 at Caxton Hall, London. The Hon R Dughlas Denman M P spoke on the House of Commons and India. St Nihal Singh spoke on India's new status in the empire. After a few questions had been asked the chairman

1 India in England p 24-25

2 Minutes of the British Committee Meeting February 20, 1906

3 Natesan G A (Madras) *Speeches and Writings of Sir William Wedderburn* p 225-26

4 Report of the British Congress Committee, 1917-18 INDIA May 1918, p 145-148

5 Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting April 1918 pp 228-230

concluded the proceedings with the remark that "Indians should be empowered at the earliest opportunity to attend and to manage their own affairs." The second series of public addresses on India was delivered to an appreciative audience on May 6, 1918 at Caxton Hall. Major D. Graham Pole who had just returned from India emphasised the need of a liberal policy towards India. J. M. Parikh spoke on "Why India wants Home Rule."<sup>1</sup>

Another important aspect of platform activity organised by the British Committee was its cooperation held out to other Indian bodies in support of publicity to Indian demands. The Committee supplied speakers to numerous other social and political gatherings where the subject of India was discussed. These lectures were arranged under the auspices of such public organisations as London India Society, National Liberal Club, Radical Club, Home Rule League etc.<sup>2</sup> Such a sustained and vigorous political activity, observed a Government report served as a valuable and authentic source of political information and education.

### The Parliament

The Parliament was the third important agency by means of which the Congress leaders sought to carry on their agitation in England. This kind of activity was considered most important by the leaders of the Congress. "India", to Wedderburn, "was in a preeminent sense a House of Common's concern". He described the relationship between Parliament and India as that of a doctor and his patient, and the doctor could make 'a correct diagnosis and find out the remedy so far as to ensure a satisfactory cure'.<sup>3</sup> In a message, issued to Indian people in 1895, Naoroji said that the battles of grievances and necessary reforms had to be fought in the Commons".<sup>4</sup>

The leaders of the Congress sought to push forward agitation in England mainly through three ways namely by securing membership of the Parliament, by organising Indian Parliamentary Committee and by direct appeal through petitions etc. In the first place considerable importance was given by the early Congress leaders to

1. Deptt. of Home (Pol.-B) Printed, Progs. May, 1918, No. 158 ( secret ); also (Pol.-A) Progs. of Oct, 1918, 221 (Confidential).

2. Ibid.

3. Wedderburn's speech at National Liberal Club London on February 18, 1895; vide His Speeches and Writings p. 162.

4. Vide INDIA, August 1895, p. 241.

he Indian membership of the Parliament Dada Bhai Naoroji was very emphatic in pointing out that not a single genuine voice was there in Parliament to acquaint it with Indian opinion on any question<sup>1</sup> He repeatedly urged the need of Indian representation in Parliament<sup>2</sup> In 1897 Gokhale, in his evidence before the Welby Commission, suggested that India should have six representatives in Parliament<sup>3</sup> In 1898, A M Bose the President of the Congress of that year demanded at least fifteen Indian seats in the Parliament<sup>4</sup> In 1904 the Congress unanimously passed a resolution that each Province or Presidency should be authorised to send at least two members to the Commons<sup>5</sup> The resolution was repeated in 1905 Membership of Parliament had a great appeal to many Congress leaders They believed that the presence of Indian members would accelerate the pace of reform Moreover, association of Indians with Parliament, they believed, would elevate Indians from the position of a subject race to an equality with the rest of the Empire The election of Naoroji to Parliament in 1892 was received with great satisfaction in the Congress circles In 1893 Wedderburn was elected and with his election an organised agitation on behalf of Congress in the British Parliament came into being There was hardly any important Indian question which was not brought to the notice of the Parliament In June 1893 the supporters of the Congress succeeded in carrying through a resolution for holding simultaneous examination of civil service<sup>6</sup> It was a notable success as the Congress since its inception had been demanding simultaneous examination in India and England

These encouraging results of the efforts of the Congress leaders led to the formation of Indian Parliamentary Committee The promoters of the Congress movement from the beginning had been trying to secure supporters in Parliament through whom Indian views on various problems concerning India could be brought to the notice of the Parliament An effort was made in 1888 when Bradlaugh on the persuasions of W C Bonnerjee, Norton Naoroji and Digby agreed to support the Indian cause Official correspondence indicates that the Congress party had connections with several

1 Report of the Indian National Congress 2nd Session 1886 p 56

2 Ibid, 1893 Session p 23

3 The Welby Commission Report Minutes of Evidence

4 Report of the Indian National Congress 1898 Session p 34

5 Ibid Resolution No, IX

6 Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons) 64, 869C-7075

members of the Parliament.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, in 1893 that an Indian Parliamentary Committee was finally established, through the efforts of the British Committee of the Congress. On July 27, 1893 Wedderburn invited some of the leading independent members of the House of Commons to a dinner to discuss the formation of an Indian Parliamentary Committee. Wedderburn moved a resolution seconded by Caine to set up a committee for the purpose of "promoting combined and well directed action among those interested in Indian affairs". By another resolution the Committee was set up. It was designated as the Indian Parliamentary Committee with Wedderburn as its chairman and Hebert Roberts as its Secretary.<sup>2</sup> In 1894 the committee consisted of 152 members. But in 1895 due to the defeat of a large number of members at the general election the number dropped to 85. In 1896 some new members joined and its total strength was increased to 125. The committee was reorganised after the Liberal victory in 1905 under the chairmanship of Sir Henry Cotton. Two hundred members joined it.<sup>3</sup> In the new House of Commons the Indian sympathizers consisted not only of retired Anglo Indians like Sir Henry Cotton and C. J. O. D'onnell but labour members like Keir Hardie and Radicals like F. C. Macharness and Dr. N. V. Rutherford. They demanded quick actions to redress Indian grievances and harassed Morley by not only asking questions regarding Indian administration but by taking active part in debates. They were, therefore, variously described or criticised as "our Indian members, the Indophils, and Anglo Indians" etc.<sup>4</sup> The members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee kept themselves informed and in close touch with Indian leaders. Their speeches in the House of Commons were fully reported in the Indian Press. They exerted immense pressure on Morely, and Morely on his part pressed Minto-the then Viceroy. Minto did not like this. He wrote to the King: "Such support at Home does untold harm in India. It is exaggerated here and encourages a belief that the people of England are in full accord with the intention of the In-

1. Vide Hira Lal Singh; Problems and Policies of the British in India (1885-1890), p. 220.

2. India, Vol. IV, August 1, 1893, p. 241, The members of the Committee included W. S. Caine, J. E. Ellis, J. Bright, W. A. Hunter, Illingworth, W. Lawsen H, Paul, J. Peas, R. T. Reid, S. Smith, C. E. Schwann, Wasan, A. Webb and Naoroji.

3. Some Early Indian Nationalists and their Allies in British Parliament, Vide English Historical Review Vol. LXXVI, April 1961, pp. 279-97.

4. Das, M. N., India under Morley and Minto. 1964, p, 63.

Indian National Congress"<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy also told the Secretary of State for India 'I am afraid that this movement convey the idea here that the people of India are recognised at home as a down-trodden race down trodden by a bureaucratic administration.'<sup>2</sup>

Several Indian issues such as partition of Bengal and deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh also figured prominently in Parliament Questions were asked by Radicals and Irish supporters of Indian cause Morley-the then Secretary of State for India, was pressed hard to justify the actions of Indian Government<sup>3</sup> Tilak's trial and conviction evoked a considerable interest in Parliament The House of Commons was more critical, and Morley thought that after he had left for House of Lords, there was nobody who could face the criticism of Dr Rutherford, Sir Henry Cotton, F G Macarney and Keir Hardie<sup>4</sup> The supporters of Indian cause also sought to countercheck propaganda hostile to Indian interest For instance Sir Henry Cotton told the House that the Bande Materam song was not disliked by the Muslims as the Under Secretary of State for India has been informed<sup>5</sup>

Agitation in Parliament was also promoted by means of direct appeal and petitions The leaders of the Congress sought to enlighten the members of the Parliaments on important problems through these petitions A petition to the House of Commons on the question of simultaneous examinations was sent<sup>6</sup> The sixth Congress authorised its President to present to the House of Commons a petition requesting the House to make the amended bill of Bradlaugh an Act This petition was a forceful appeal to draw the attention of the Parliament on the issue of Council reform In 1890 the Congress also sent a petition for restoring the right of members of the House to explain grievances before the supply<sup>7</sup> In a memorandum, prepared by Sir Henry Cotton on the question of Partition of Bengal the leaders of the Congress also sought to

1 Minto to King August 9 1906 Morley collection (Private Correspondence)

2 Minto to Morley, August 1, 1906

3 Morley to Minto August 23, 1907

4 Morley to Minto August 26 and October 7 1908

5 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) August 16 1906 1323-24

6 Report of the Indian National Congress Alahabad 5th session 1892 Resolution XI (1904) This petition was sent to Dadabhai Naoroji for presentation to the House of Commons

7 Report of the Indian National Congress, Calcutta 6th Session 1890, Resolution III

place before the Parliament the Indian grievances.<sup>1</sup> In the early years of the Congress much emphasis was laid by the leaders of British Committee of the Congress on direct appeal to the British Parliament by means of petitions and memorials. In 1906 Dada-bhai Naoroji, after declaring the goal of Congress as the attainment of SWARAJ said: 'That this object could be achieved first by sending a "petition of rights" to the King Emperor, to the House of Commons and House of Lords.' He emphasised that the Parliament should be convinced that Indians were just in claiming all British rights of self-government.<sup>2</sup>

### **Holding of Congress Session in England**

A notable technique, adopted by the Congress to extend its activities was the idea of holding its annual session in England. This aspect of Congress activity is very less known. The leaders of the Congress retained their faith in the sense of justice and generosity of the British people. Hence they gave so much importance to propaganda in England that Congress in its 1890 session proposed to hold its 1892 session in England. A resolution was passed to the effect "that the provisional arrangement be made to hold a Congress of not less than 100 delegates in England in 1892." The Congress further resolved "to sanction a sum of Rs. 46,000 for the expenses" Standing Congress Committees were directed to nominate delegates of their respective circles to the proposed Congress session in England.<sup>3</sup> This was, in fact, a noble idea, and was welcomed by the British Committee also. But the Committee suggested to hold the proposed session some time after the General Elections in Britain after 1892.<sup>4</sup> In accordance with this recommendation, the Congress postponed the idea of proposed session.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless the Congress in its session of 1892 "took the opportunity of securing the sympathy of British electorate by celebrating the memorial occasion

1. Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee meeting April 3, 1906: Vol. July 5 1904- Oct. 20, 1909. This memorandum was sent through the Indian Parliamentary Committee.

2. Presidential Address, Calcutta Session, 1906, (Report of the Indian National Congress, p. 21.

3. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1890, Resolution XI, p. 88.

4. Minutes of the British Committee Meeting September 14, 1891: Vol. Jan. 25, 1891-Dec. 19, 1893.

5. Report of the Indian National Congress, Nagpur, the 7th session 1891, Resolution XV, p. 66.



of the election of Dadabhai Naoroji—the first Indian to the Parliament” The Congress applauded the election of a ‘representative’ for the people in the House of Commons by the Central Finsbury constituency as a noble, generous recognition of the claim of India to make her voice heard. The Congress passed a resolution “thanking the electors of Central Finsbury, both for their kindly sympathising with its objects and for having so generously accorded to it the valuable services of their honoured friend Mr Dadabhai Naoroji, who is destined to represent both Central Finsbury and India in British Parliament”<sup>1</sup>

Although the idea of holding Congress session in England was not materialised, yet the leaders of the Congress persisted in this technique. In 1898, the idea was renewed at the suggestion of Jai Shri Ram of Lahore. He proposed that the next session of the Congress should be held in England. This idea was also considered by the British Committee. But due to financial and other difficulties relating to the arrangements, the Committee again advised the postponement of the session.<sup>2</sup> However, the idea was not dropped. Correspondence between Gokhale and Lajpat Rai reveals that Lajpat Rai, who had gone to England in 1905 as one of the delegates of the Congress also emphasised the need of holding a big demonstration of the Congress in England.<sup>3</sup> This technique had fascinated the Congress leaders so much that the leaders made continuous efforts to materialise the plan. For example Keir Hardie, who visited India in 1907, asked the Congress leaders to hold the gathering of the Congress in England.<sup>4</sup> In 1908 the urgency of such a kind of political activity was discussed by D. E. Wacha. He wrote to Gokhale who was then in England “Why not at this juncture have a Congress session in London in March. If we can get 50 strong good people it could be a great success.” Wacha also estimated a sum of rupees 99,000 as the expenses of holding a Congress in England. ‘By this session’, Wacha hoped, “the best benefit would be taken out of the Liberal ministry”<sup>5</sup>

1 Report of the Indian National Congress Allahabad Session 1892 Resolution XVI, p. 112

2 Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting Sep. 1. 1898

3 Lajpat Rai to Gokhale August 3. 1905 Gokhale Papers

4 Report on the Native Newspapers of Bombay PARIKSHAK 10th October 1907

5 Wacha to Gokhale August 15. 1908 Gokhale Papers File No. 569 Pt. IV, also his letter of 25 Sept. 1908

The matter was taken up by the British Committee. It nevertheless could not get enthusiastic support. Such a gathering was not possible without difficulties. To get fifty good men to come to England, and to manage the funds for the purpose was not 'an easy task'.<sup>1</sup> In 1909 Surendranath Banerjea, who was in England to attend the Imperial Press Conference, suggested to the British Congress Committee that much good result would be from a session of the Congress held in London—if possible in April 1909. He asked the Chairman of the British Committee to contact Sir Pheroz Shah Mehta, R. C. Dutta and Gopal Krishan Gokhale for the purpose.<sup>2</sup> The Chairman of the Committee Sir Wedderburn, therefore, acted upon his advice and wrote to Gokhale.<sup>3</sup> The proposal, again received attention during the days of Home Rule agitation. The Congress resolved to arrange a special session in England to press Indian claim for self-government on the attention of the Government and people of England.<sup>4</sup> But the Indian leaders of the Congress did not show much enthusiasm, and the venture remained a pious hope.

### Deputations to England

Sending deputations to England was another important technique of the Congress to extend its activities in England. Congress laid great emphasis on this method and frequent deputations was a marked feature of the activities of the Congress. Inspired by sense of liberalism of the British, the Congress leaders resorted to this method. They believed that their grievances would be surely redressed, if the British nation was properly informed and educated on Indian problem. The British Committee always impressed upon the Congress the need of sending more Indians to England for this purpose.<sup>5</sup> Congress, therefore, sent several deputations from time to time. The first deputation was appointed in 1889 with a view to furnish reliable and authentic information on Indian affairs to the British people and the Parliament, and to urge upon

1. Wedderburn to Gokhale July 8, 1909, File No. 579 Pt. III, also Minutes of the British Committee of the Congress Sept. 14, 1909.

2. Minutes of the British Committee June 30, 1909 Vol. July 1904—October 1909.

3. Gokhale Papers; Wedd. to Gokhale, July 8, 1909.

4. Report of the Indian National Congress 32nd Lucknow Session 1916 Resolution XXII, p. 121.

5. Minutes of the British Congress Committee October 24, 1905.

them the need of reform advocated by the congress<sup>1</sup> The deputationists rendered valuable service in the cause of Congress propaganda. They were in England at a time when the reading of Lord Cross's Bill on Indian Councils was postponed This delay gave them an opportunity to campaign for their demand with intensity They addressed more than fifty meetings and explained to the audience the constitutional nature of the Congress movement and the demand of the Congress In their private meetings also, they pleaded India's cause In 1897 Congress leaders namely D E Wach, G K. Gokhale, S N Benerjea and G Subramania Iyer, who had gone to England to give evidence before the Royal Commission on Expenditure also performed the task of a delegation, and utilised the opportunity in propagating the cause of demands advocated by the Congress Most important were the delegates sent in the early years of the 20th century Looking to the near approach of the General Elections in England, and the vital importance at this crisis, the Congress in 1904 considered it 'expedient to depute trustworthy and experienced representatives with a view 'to bring the claims of India before the electors, before the Parliamentary candidates, and before the political leaders' The Congress also resolved to raise a fund not less than of Rs 3,000<sup>2</sup> Gokhale was selected as a delegate to press forward the claims of India in England He was also the President elect for the forthcoming Benaras Session of 1905 Lajpat Rai, who arrived in London in June 1905, was joined by Gokhale in October 1905 Both of them carried on a political propaganda on behalf of the Congress They spoke on public gatherings, held interviews with the British officials and addressed numerous Press conferences On reaching London, Gokhale informed the press that my principal plea to people of England will be for self-government for India<sup>3</sup> In his speeches he explained the constitutional character of the Indian National Congress, and urged the need of establishing a representative government in India It is also on record that his campaign in Yorkshire and Lancashire was a brilliant success His visit to Lancashire was important in view of the agitation for Swadeshi and Boycott of Man-

1 Report of the Indian National Congress 5th Session at Bombay 1889, Resolution, XIII (c), p 83

2 Report of the Indian National Congress 20th Session at Bombay Resolution XV, p 146

3 Gokhale's interview to the Daily News in India dated October 2, 1905

chester goods following the Partition of Bengal.<sup>1</sup> The Congress, in its 1905 session, put on record "its sense of high appreciation of the valuable services recently rendered by Hon'ble Gokhale and Lajpat Rai in England."<sup>2</sup>

Gokhale performed the task of delegation so brilliantly that he was again deputed by the Congress in its 1905 session to plead India's case in England.<sup>3</sup> Gokhale reached England on April 29, 1906 and remained there for four months delivering lectures and holding press conferences. His 'principal work', in his own words, was 'a tug of war' with the officials of the India Council, who captured Morley's mind and his access to Morley were restricted than theirs'. But he endeavoured to do within one man's reach-a task 'not humanly possible' in those circumstances.<sup>4</sup> He had interviews with Morley five times, and impressed the Secretary of State for India considerably. His speeches and personal contact attracted wide attention of the British people, and the Liberal Party in particular. The British Committee of the Congress congratulated Gokhale on his good work done for his countrymen in England, and placed on record its great appreciation of his disinterested and public spirited labour on behalf of India.<sup>5</sup>

In 1913 the Congress again appointed a deputation to represent Indian views on the manifold problems of India. The significant feature of this deputation was that the Congress at this time specified the issues on which the British opinion was to be enlightened. These included such questions as Indians in South Africa, Press Act, Separation of Judicial and Executive functions and Reforms of India Council.<sup>6</sup> During the course of first World War, when the Congress set on foot a movement for self-government within the Empire, the Congress again resorted to the method of educative propaganda by means of delegation. The Congress authorised the All India Congress Committee in 1916 'to arrange a deputation which should proceed to England to press Indian claims on the

1. Vide Department of Home (Public-A) Proceedings 29th of February, (Confidential): His speech in 1905.

2. Report of the Indian National Congress 21st session at Benaras 1905, Resolution XIX, p. 159.

3. Ibid, Resolution XX, 159.

4. Gokhale to Natesrao, July 6, 1906 : Gokhale Papers F. N. 203, I.

5. Vide Minutes of the British Committee of the Congress August 28, 1906. Vol July 1904- October 1909.

6. Report of the Indian National Congress Karachi 29th session, 1913, Resolution XVIII, p. 112.

attention of Government and people of England' <sup>1</sup> This deputation went to England in 1919 Speeches, personal contacts and interviews were the means by which the deputationists sought to propagate their views So much importance was given to this method that the Congress expressed its opinion in 1919 that the 'time has arrived for establishing a permanent mission for its own propaganda work in England' It also appointed a Committee to collect necessary funds for this purpose and to select the personnel for the mission for the first year <sup>2</sup>

### Personal Contact

The activities of the Indian National Congress in England were also pushed forward by means of personal contact This technique was considered very important by the Congress leaders and it was one of the accepted methods of political propaganda in England In order to familiarise and to acquaint the British people with the Indian aspirations the Congress leaders laid great emphasis on developing contact with prominent representatives of British opinion This contact was promoted by various ways such as interchange of British and Indian leaders, interviews, correspondence etc Since the very beginning of the Congress movement its leaders had encouraged an interchange of leaders From time to time English members of the British Committee came to India and attended the Congress sessions The expenses of their visits were met by the Congress An interesting example of such financial assistance has been quoted by Lord Minto, who noticed with great apprehension the growing contact between the leaders of the two countries In his correspondence he observed at one place that he has learnt that Rs 15,000 had been sent to Henry Cotton's son from the Congress to assist the contact between the agitators in India and their sympathisers in England He further said that a large sum of rupees 20,000 was sent to Cokhale to England for the same purpose <sup>3</sup> Among those who visited India and attended the Congress sessions, prominent were Charles Bradlaugh, C F Schwann W S Caine Samuel Smith, Keir Hardie, Dr H V Rutherford Dr G B Clark and others They studied the Indian problems for themselves, and enlightened the British opinion by means of writings and speeches

1 Report of the Indian National Congress Lucknow 32nd session 1916 Resolution XXII, p 121

2 Ibid Amritsar Session 34th 1919 Resolution XXII, p 162

3 Minto Papers Minto to the King, August 9, 1906

Bradlaugh's presence in the 1889 session of the Congress and his consequent support for and sympathy with the Congress encouraged the British leaders in their belief that their cause would attract British public, if an intensive propaganda was undertaken in England. Bradlaugh's remarkable advocacy of India's cause and his effort to introduce a Bill for the reform of the Council earned him the title of 'Member of India'. C. B. Schwann spoke of the representative character of the Congress in Parliament in 1891, and sought to enlist the sympathy of the members of the Parliament for Congress work. W. S. Caine—a member of the British Committee attended 1896 session of the Congress. Samuel Smith—a liberal M. P., and a keen student of Indian affairs visited India first in 1886 and then again he revisited India and attended the Congress session in 1906. The same year he wrote a book 'India Revisited'. He was very much impressed by the Congress and its activities and informed the Secretary of State for India Lord Morley about it.<sup>1</sup> Keir Hardie and Nevinson were also supporters of the Congress movement. They came to India and championed that views in England expressed by the Congress.<sup>2</sup> In addition to these visits men like Wedderburn and Cotton in England were speaking and writing in favour of Indian demands. On the invitation of the British Committee Indian leaders were also invited such as Gokhale, Banerjea and others. On account of the frequent visits of leaders to England, Indian propaganda was greatly encouraged. These Indian visitors were described in official records 'as the missionaries, whose audience in England supplied stream to members of Parliament in want of other things to do'. Lord Minto—the Viceroy viewed with anxiety this activity of the Congress. In December 1908 he pointed out how important political Indian agitators were fomenting dissatisfaction in England. He specially mentioned the names of Lajpat Rai and Bepin Chand Pal. His main complaint was not so much against those who went to England as against the Englishmen who listened to such people and encouraged them.<sup>3</sup>

The leaders of the Congress also sought to develop contact with the British through correspondence and circulars. Regular correspondence with the members of Parliament, British officials and

1. C. H. Philips (ed.) *Politics and Society in India*, p. 72.

2. Wasti, R. W. : *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement (1905-1910)* p. 107.

3. Minto to Lansdowne December 7, 1901, Minto Papers.

other prominent personalities was maintained. From the very beginning Dadabhai, Gokhale, Wedderburn and Henry Cotton apprised the British authorities with the Indian problems and insisted for the redress of their grievances. These letters conveyed the Indian feelings in regard to the Indian problems and the Congress attitude towards these problems. For example Wedderburn drew the attention of the Secretary of State for India George Hamilton towards the serious economic questions which faced the Indian administration, and pressed upon him the need to establish 'more harmonious' relations between the authorities and outside Indian opinion.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore the propaganda and agitational work of the Congress in England were fostered by means of interviews with the members of Parliament, editors of prominent papers, and other publicmen of England. A number of interviews were given by the Congress representatives in England. Notable of these were Banerjea, Gokhale, Naoroji, Wedderburn and Cotton. These interviews covered a wide range of subjects connected with the Indian problems viz. Reform of the Councils, Civil Service question and other matters affecting India and her people. The persons interviewed included Lord Courtney, Winston Churchill, Charles Dikie, Hamilton, John Morley, W S Steed, Mac Karness Schwann, Gladstone Haldane, Lord Crew and Ramsay Maedonald. The Indian leaders felt that they 'had convinced them of their grievances'.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note, S N Banerjea's interviews to a London Press, while he was in London in 1890 as a member of the Congress delegation. He explained the Indian view on the question of reform of the Council. Explaining the nature of Representative Government demanded by the Congress he demanded 'the Council to be purely consultative in nature upholding the rights of the people to elect their own representatives'.<sup>3</sup> Another noteworthy example is of Gokhale's visit to England in 1900. He interviewed with Morley seven times and left a great imprint on him. He also met H Campbell Bannerman - the then British Prime Minister which upset the Secretary of State Morley since the latter's prior permission was not sought. Morley resented and disliked it.<sup>4</sup>

1 Hamilton Collection Microfilm reel 2 Vol I/III EUR MSS collection  
Encl. to Lord George Hamilton October 19, 1900

2 Banerjea S N *A Nation In Making* p 244

3 Vide INDIA Vol June 6 1890 p 146

4 Morley to Minto 11 May, 1900 (Morley Collection)

Fourthly the British Congress Committee also concentrated its energies to persuade the British leaders in order to make them interested in Indian problems and advocate Indian cause in the Parliament. This was a significant method by which the constitutional agitation was put in tone. For example, the committee approached Dr. Hunter - a M.P. and persuaded him to act on behalf of the Congress in Parliament, since the date for debate and second reading of Lord Cross's Bill was fixed. Not satisfied by his attitude, Dadabhai and Wedderburn contacted another member of Parliament James Bryce and requested him to champion the cause of elective principle advocated by the Congress. The Congress leaders were also successful in enlisting the support and sympathy of the great Liberal leader Gladstone who expressed his intention of speaking in the parliament in support of the Congress demands. The Congress leaders in England also attempted to persuade British leaders like Macdonald and Gladstone to preside over the Congress sessions in India. This was perhaps a move to impress the British authorities that the Indian movement had a considerable support of eminent persons, also to create a back-ground for the fulfilment of their aspirations at their hands when they came to power. However these persons declined to preside over the Congress sessions for one or another reason.

The last but not the least was the technique adopted by the British Committee to strengthen the Indian movement by arranging several dinners and other social engagements in which the Indian problems were discussed. Such gatherings were attended by prominent leaders of England. The inception of the Indian Parliamentary Committee on July 27, 1893 was only due to such an attempt when Wedderburn and Dadabhai Naoroji invited some leading independent members of Parliament to a dinner. On this occasion the formation of an Indian Party in Parliament was discussed, and the Indian subjects were made known hitherto neglected by the British Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

The promoters of the Congress movement in England had great faith in the efficacy of peaceful and constitutional agitation. Its chief characteristic was that it was linked with the sense of justice and the democratic instincts of the British people. Therefore the entire strategy of this method of agitation consisted of direct appeal to

1. Vide INDIA, Vol. IV August 1, 1893, p. 241.



the British people and the Parliament. The Congress leaders believed that the British nation was essentially just and good and that if it could be acquainted with the true state of Indian affairs all their grievances would be redressed. Hence they organised an effective strategy of educative propaganda in England. They had every hope of the success of their agitation in England for they believed their political aspirations were just and legitimate and were based on the British promises given to them from time to time. Their method of prayers and petitions to the British would certainly appeal to the democratic instinct of the British who would sooner or later realise the need of satisfying the aspirations of Indians as they had done in the case of other colonies of the Empire. In course of time India would also be granted by the British the same type of government which they had conferred on other colonies. Although the results of their agitation remained consistently discouraging yet the early Congress leaders continued to believe in the efficacy of their method of direct appeal and persisted in it for a long time.

### **The Journal—"India"**

As explained earlier this annexe contains a detailed discussion of the Journal INDIA which was a notable activity of the British Committee. It was started in 1890. As a vehicle of propaganda and publicity this Journal played an important role and contributed significantly to the progress of the Congress movement. A systematic study of this activity has been hitherto ignored. It is therefore in the fitness of things that detailed and authentic information may be given in a separate note.

The inception of the Journal was largely due to the initiative and efforts of Hume. But he was not the first person to moot the idea of a Press organ of Indian political body to push forward Indian activity in England as is generally believed. The idea was quite old and was conceived even earlier than Hume. As early as 1841 the British India Society in England published a journal entitled *British India Advocate* under the editorship of William Adam, the friend of Raja Rammohan Roy<sup>1</sup>. The *Bengal Harikara* dated March 4 1841 described it as a small folio of eight pages with a repulsive physiognomy. The journal sought to acquaint British public with Indian problems, It however did not survive.

1 Majumdar R. C. *History of the Freedom Movement* Vol I p 316

long.<sup>1</sup> Available contemporary recorded evidence further shows that the idea of starting a journal in England devoted to the propagation of Indian cause was conceived by a London correspondent of Calcutta Statesmen long before it had occurred to Hume. In a letter of the correspondent published in the HINDU of July 12, 1883, it was observed : "If the educated gentlemen of India desire to have their side of the story put before the English public, they must lose no time in taking measures for doing it for themselves." Suggesting the need of an Indian journal in England letter further said : "Is it altogether beyond the power and liberality of native gentlemen to establish in London such a journal as that of Poona Sarvajanic Sabha" ? It is interesting to note that the "Liberal" of Calcutta—a contemporary paper endorsed the idea of the need of Indian journal in England and suggested the names of Lal Mohan Gose and Dadabhai Naoroji for its editorship.<sup>2</sup>

Although the idea of Indian press activity in England owes its origin earlier than Hume yet it must be said to the credit of Hume that he gave definite shape to the idea. It was largely due to the initiative and incessant efforts of Hume that INDIA was started in 1890 as a regular activity of the British Committee. He repeatedly wrote to the British Committee to start a journal as its press organ. In accordance with his instructions the British Committee appointed a sub-Committee<sup>3</sup> to work out the details.<sup>4</sup> The Committee endorsed the proposal of Hume and recommended that a journal entitled INDIA having for its object 'the discussion and dissemination of information on Indian problems should be started immediately'.<sup>5</sup> On the basis of this recommendation the British Committee started the Journal in 1890. It was first issued as a monthly and was later converted into a weekly from January 1898. Since then it continued to be published regularly as a weekly paper.<sup>6</sup> In the beginning the Journal was managed by the prominent leaders of the Congress in their individual capacity. It was later taken over by the British Committee which conducted it for few years, As the journal entacted considerable deficit, the committee, there-

1. Majumdar, B. B. Congress and Congressmen in Pre-Gandhian Era (1885-1917) p, 151.

2. THE HINDU, July 12, 1883.

3. This committee consisted of W. S Caine, Dadabhai Naoroji, George Yulu and William Digby.

4. Vide Minutes of the British Committee meeting October 3, 1899.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid meeting July 6, 1897 Vol. Jan. 5, 1897—March 27, 1900.

fore, decided to transfer it to a Limited Company in 1903. Consequently a company called "The Indian Newspaper Company Ltd." was formed with Hume, Wedderburn, Naoroji and others as its directors. This company henceforth managed the paper.

The journal was edited by eminent and influential persons having intimate knowledge of India and its problems. Such well-known advocates of Indian cause of reform as William Digby, Cotton who had lived in India and were well acquainted with Indian problems had been its editors.<sup>1</sup> Largely due to their efforts and experience the journal became a fruitful activity.

Funds for the Journal were collected from various sources. There is a general impression among the writers of Indian national activity in England that the journal was entirely financed by the British Committee. This however, is not a correct view. A study of correspondence between Hamilton the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy during the year 1899 shows that the journal was financed by the various sources.<sup>2</sup> Subscription was an important source of income of the journal. The annual subscription was Rs. 8/- per copy. Due to its popularity the journal was largely subscribed. According to Government records substantial help was received from subscriptions.<sup>3</sup> Another source of income of the journal was donations from Indians as well as from such British persons who were sympathetic to wards Indian cause of reforms.<sup>4</sup> Several donators desired their names not to be disclosed.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore a part of the contribution of the Congress to the British Committee was also utilised for the maintenance of the journal. The finances of the journal, however, had never been

1. A complete list of the Editors is given in Appendix No

2. Hamilton Collection, Enclosure to Garzon's letter to Hamilton 23th June, 1899. Note of C. S. Bayley June 18, 1899.

3. Ibid.

4. Sir William Wedderburn, A. O. Hume, W. C. Bonnerjee and Dadabhai Naoroji financed the journal from their own pockets. Dadabhai even advanced small sums from £30 to £200 whenever needed. In 1901, he deposited Rs. 25,000 for the Government paper a material guarantee against a deficit and again in 1902 a deficit of £127 was left. Vide Gokhale Papers F. N. 69 W. C. Bonnerjee to C. K. Gokhale April 3, 1903.

In 1893 and 95 Maharaja of Darbhanga gave Rs. 8,000, in 1897 £3,000, J. N. Tata sent an annual subscription of a draft for Rs. 1,000, the Maharaja of Gekwad subscribed for 120 copies in 1906, Vide Hamilton Collection, Note of C. S. Bayley, June 18, 1899. Minutes of the British Congress Committee July 20, 1897, Ibid April 30, 1907 respectively.

Vide Minutes of the British Committee, February 6, 1894.

very sound as those of the British Committee. Nevertheless help was forthcoming in times of crisis. It is noteworthy that the journal was saved from being collapsed due to the philanthropy and sacrifices of the Congress supporters. But in 1906 the journal began to starve due to the paucity of funds. In addition to the Indian and British donors, G. K. Gokhale and D. E. Wacha deserve special mention. They made strenuous efforts to raise the number of subscribers of the journal in response to the call of the British Committee.<sup>1</sup> A series of considerable loss in 1906 led the directors of the Company to contemplate the winding up of the journal. But Wedderburn did not lose his nerve, and took up the responsibility. He did what he could for the improvement of the funds for the paper. However the financial position of the paper was not well and it was being carried with great financial difficulty.

As a vehicle of propaganda and publicity the journal played an important role. Its main features were discussions on Indian problems, information regarding programme and proceedings of the Congress, letters and articles on Indian problems. Discussions on Indian problems were revealing and informative. For instance, it gave wide publicity to the facts relating to famine which occurred frequently during the period 1858-1909. The Parliament was reminded of its liabilities and duties towards the Indian people. An interesting discussion under the title 'Facts and Hallucination' appeared in the 6th issue of the paper of 1901.

### **The Hallucination**

That the Famine in India is the famine of food.

### **The Fact**

That the Famine is a Famine of money. George Hamilton pointed out that the supply of food was almost the least of the difficulties with which the Indian Government had to contend. There was always a sufficiency of food in the great continent of India even in the years of drought.<sup>2</sup>

Hamilton's letters show that the paper had remarkable influence in enlightening the British public on Indian grievances. He was extremely irritated at the criticism of the Government by the Journal. He expressed extreme dislike of the Journal which he called the

1. Gokhale to Wedderburn April 7, 1904 : Gokhale Papers F. N. 203.

2. Vide INDIA June 7, 1901. Vol. VI No. 5, p. 275.

"pernicious little rag" Much of the information about INDIA, he said, was derived from this paper<sup>1</sup>

Editorials and comments were generally fascinating as well as informative. The editors were well acquainted with Indian problems and several of them had lived for long in India. The need for reform of the Indian Legislative Council figured prominently in the editorials. During the discussion of the official Indian Council bill, an editorial comment quoted a letter of A O Hume, who thought Lord Cross's Bill simply an 'insult to the country'. It further observed that 'the authorities being petitioned for bread cast stones on our faces'. The Bill was criticised because it did not accede to a major demand of the Congress for elective principle.

*Informative and authoritative articles and letters on Indian problems* from the pen of well known authors also appeared frequently in the journal. Richard Garth Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court, and R C Dutt's articles on separation of judicial and executive functions and on economic problems are noteworthy. Letters from members of Parliament and other influential public men were interesting feature of the journal. In a letter C E Schwann M P observed, "How can we expect the Indian people to remain attached to our rule if we treat them like spoilt children and tell them they should not have the reforms promised to them if they cry for more". Quite interesting was a letter published in its May 1890 issue from an Albanian Pathan who emphasised the national character of the Congress. "After studying carefully, the congress literature" the letter observed that 'these officers of the New India and their coworkers are peace makers between Indian races and the British people. They teach the Musalmans, Sikhs and Hindoos to forget the past, to appreciate the present and to work for the glorious future. They are doing what must strengthen the British Empire and make it more vulnerable than can be effected by millions of English bayonets'.<sup>2</sup> Conservatives like Richard Garth's assessment of the Congress movement was sober and well balanced and had remarkable effect. It has been admitted in the official records that articles and

1 Hamilton Collection. Curzon Hamilton correspondence. Note of C S Bayley. General Sup ft of the Thagi & Dakati Depot. 18 June 1893. Encl to Curzon's letter to Hamilton 28 June 1893. Microfilm Reel no. 8 India pt. II Vols. XIII, XIV, V, VI EUR MSS Collection.

2 Letter of C E Schwann to the 'Daily News' quoted in INDIA August 28 1891 Vol II p 243.

3 Vide INDIA May 30, 1890 p 130.

comments appearing in the journal exercised a great influence. It has been noted in an official paper that one of the leading object in the establishment of the journal was "to bring grist to the Congress mill." The same note observed that the paper was popular and exercised a "pernicious" influence.<sup>1</sup> Lord Hamilton the Secretary of State for India subscribed to this view.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the press activity through this journal exercised a powerful influence in England. As one of the techniques of the Congress propaganda in England, the journal became an important and effective medium of awakening the British people and focusing their attention on vital issues relating to India and her people. It supplied reliable information to the British public and the Parliament about the actual state of things in India. It further counteracted ~~the~~ propaganda of an influential section of London Press which was hostile to the demands of the Congress.

1. Hamilton Collection: Note of C. S. Bayley, June 18, 1899.

2. Ibid Hamilton to Curzon, May 18, 1899 (His letter about counteracting Congress activities).

FROM the very beginning the Congress agitated for the reform of the British system of administration in India and demanded the introduction of representative form of government. It based its demand on the fixed conviction that the introduction of Representative Institutions will prove one of the most important practical steps towards the amelioration of the condition of the people.<sup>1</sup> Although an exact definition of its demand was not attempted during the early phase of the Congress movement yet it included mainly such reforms of political and administrative character as the expansion and the enlargement of powers of Legislative Councils and the Indianisation of Civil Services. The solution of economic problems was also sought in terms of political reform. These demands were repeatedly urged upon the British authorities by the Congress for acceptance. In 1905 the Congress however articulated a definite demand of representative form of government of the colonial type and asked the British Government to accede to it. It was embodied in a resolution which demanded 'a larger voice of the people of India in the administration and control of the affairs of their own country'. For this purpose the Congress sought 'a further expansion and reform of the supreme and Provincial Councils' in order to make them 'more representative of the people so that the non official members might have 'a real voice in the Government of the country'.<sup>2</sup> This demand acquired a wide popularity and intensity in 1906 when the Congress presided over by Dadabhai Naoroji asked that the system of Government obtaining in the self governing British colonies should be extended to India.<sup>3</sup> Henceforth it became the chief plank of the Congress programme of agitation in India as well as in England. It gathered to it such

1 Report of the Indian National Congress 1886 Resolution II

2 Report of the Indian National Congress 1905 Resolution II

3 Report of the Indian National Congress 1906 Resolution IX

a momentum so as to constitute a problem with which the British were now faced.

### **Agitation for the reform of the Legislative Councils (First phase 1885-1892)**

The question of the Legislative Councils was given great prominence by the Congress from the very beginning and was always placed in the forefront of its discussions. The first Congress, considered the reform of Supreme and existing Local Councils as essential, and urged the admission into them of a considerable portion of elected members. It also demanded the enlargement of the powers and functions of the Councils.<sup>1</sup> In the second session the question of the Council was discussed at length. Dababhai Naoroji, the President of this session pointed out 'that without representative government there be no government, and without it', he asked, 'what good was for India to be under the British Raj'.<sup>2</sup> Under the influence of these ideas the Congress in 1886 emphatically reaffirmed the resolution of 1885, and distinctly declared "its belief that the reform and extension of the Council therein suggested, have now become essential alike in the interest of India and England". In order to give effect to this demand, the Congress also put forth a tentative electoral scheme.<sup>3</sup> Year after year this demand was repeated and the Congress leaders in England sought to attract the attention of the British Government and the Parliament to the urgency and importance of the reform of the Councils by means of resolutions, memorials and the British sympathisers of the Congress movement.

The first concrete attempt in the direction of an organised effort for creating a lively interest in the members of Parliament on the question of the reforms of the Council was taken in 1889. In its session of that year the Congress adopted a skelton scheme for the representative government and reconstitution of the councils. The elective principle and the representation of the minorities were the two important features of the scheme.<sup>4</sup> The Congress authorised

1. Report of the Indian National Congress. 1885, Resolution III.

2. Report of the Indian National Congress. 1886, p. 21.

3. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1886, Resolutions III & IV.

4. According to this scheme as in the proposals of 1886 the councils were to consist respectively of members not less than one half of whom were to be elected, not more than one fourth to be ex-officio members and the rest to be nominated by the Government, whenever the Parsis, Christians, Muslims or Hindus were in



its President 'to submit the same to Charles Bradlaugh M P with the request that "he may be pleased to cause a Bill" to be drafted on the lines indicated in this skeleton scheme, and introduce the same in the British House of Commons'<sup>1</sup>

### Bradlaugh's Bill

At the request of the Congress Bradlaugh drafted a Bill It provided an elaborate scheme of electoral colleges, with proportional representation and a large number of elected members It was introduced in the Parliament in February 1890 But it was dropped after the first reading He, however, produced a more modest Bill leaving the details to be settled by rules The new and the modified Bill was approved by the Congress It also submitted to the Parliament a request praying both the Houses to pass the same into law<sup>2</sup> But as a Bill for Ireland under the title of Land Purchases Bill for Ireland was receiving greater importance attention and public time, Bradlaugh's Bill had no chance for survival It was again out-voted by the Parliament causing great disappointment to Indians<sup>3</sup> The British Press was aware to the idea of electoral college and some other provisions of the Bill In addition to it, as Bradlaugh wrote to the Secretary of the British Committee, the Bill even lost support of any considerable number of members of the House of Commons<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless one of the important consequences of Bradlaugh's Bill was that it precipitated matters, and the British Government hastened to introduce its own Bill in the House of Lords on 21st of February 1890

### The First Congress Deputation to England

Apart from Bradlaugh's Bill the Congress sought to extend its activities to England by sending deputation In its session of 1889 the Congress for the first time resolved to send a deputation "to represent its views in England and press upon the consideration of the British public political reforms" which it had advocated<sup>5</sup>

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minority, the total number of that minority elected to the Provincial Legislature should not as far as possible, bear a less proportion to the total number of members elected than the minority itself bore to the total population Vide Report Indian National Congress 1889 Resolution II

1 Report of the Indian National Congress, 1889 Resolution II

2 Report of the I N Congress 1890 Resolution I

3 INDIA Vol I April 25, 1890 p 92

4 INDIA, October 31, 1890 The Indian Council Reform Bill p 274

5 Report of the Indian National Congress, 1889, Resolution XIII

Great importance was attached by the Congress to this method of agitation. The deputation consisted of several influential persons known to the British public. More important of them were S. N. Banerjea, Eardley Norton, A. O. Hume, W. C. Bonnerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, R. N. Mudholkar and Sir William Wedderburn. The deputation reached London in April 1890 at a very favourable time when the Indian Councils Bill was postponed for discussion in the Parliament. This deference and delay of the Bill gave to the deputationists more time to extend their agitation in England. The members of the deputation sought to create public opinion in support of this demand of representative form of government in India by explaining the Congress approach to the changes in the constitution of existing Councils. The main issue of the controversy was the inclusion of the principle of election in the proposed Indian Councils Bill. With the cooperation and assistance of the British Committee, the deputationists addressed a number of public meetings, and appealed to all sections of British public opinion but a favourable response came from the Liberals. In one of the meeting organised by the British Committee Justice Mearns supported the Congress demand of Council reform and said, "We feel it is wholly impossible and utterly absurd to dream of governing a country like India for ever by the sword, to dream of keeping a country with such a population in a condition of perpetual infancy .....therefore we feel that if we are to maintain our Indian Empire, it must be by free consent, and the cooperation of the people of India."<sup>1</sup> At an another important public meeting, attended by several notables like Bonfilar Mayns. Mance Bignon, Christian, Hume and S. N. Banerjea, William Wedderburn pleaded for the voiceless people of India for liberty and justice. He said : "..... if these words have any importance, any weight, any signification among Christian people, I am sure, I shall not have pleaded in vain .....your best efforts will be put forth on behalf of those vast and multitudinous races of the East, for whose well being you are responsible to providence and who know no higher tribunal than the tribunal of the English people."<sup>2</sup>

Of all such public meetings quite interesting was a debate at the Oxford Union on May 22, 1890. A resolution 'That the House views with regret the non-recognition of the elective principle in the

1. Vide INDIA, April 25, 1890, p. 98.

2. Vide INDIA, April 25, 1890, p. 89; Speech of Sir William Wedderburn, April 14, 1890 at Foresters Hall, Clerkenwell Road London.

Bill now before the House of Commons', was moved by Eardley Norton. In his speech Norton placed the Indian case before the English audience and advocated the demand of inclusion of Indians in their own administration.<sup>1</sup> It is note worthy that the Congress representatives in England faced the stiff situation with remarkable success. Since the Oxford Union was a 'stronghold of conservatives', Hume, Norton and Banerjea were afraid of losing the motion in the gathering of the young conservatives. Some time they were disappointed at the hostile attitude of Wilson, J F W Gallbraith, Hume Ceil and other English speakers, and mostly conservatives voted against the motion. Yet the leaders of the Congress struggled hard to win their case and made the best of the bad situation. S N Banerjea left a great impression upon the conservatives by his presentation of facts and figures. Finally the motion was carried by majority of votes in favour of the Congress demand.<sup>2</sup> This was a memorable and significant achievement of the first Congress deputation which demonstrated that the Congress programme of reform was so moderate as to commend itself even to the most conservative section of the British people.

Several such other public meetings were arranged. Nearly all the members of the deputation participated actively in these meetings. More important among those meetings were at Town Hall Northampton, Horns Assembly, Rooms Kennington, Elusis, Club Chelsea, Exter Devonshire Banstaple Devonshire Swansea, S O Waller, Cardiff, Bristol, Bath, Townton and Plymouth. At such meetings the prominent members of Parliament like Mac Carthy, Bradlaugh, W Martinwood either presided or took part in the discussions. Other participants included Councillor Purser, Alderby, J E Hall, W Billingham, Rev T Gasquoine, F O Adam, F S Carrat and Pincott.

### Personal Contact

In addition to the public meetings, the Congress leaders also gave interviews to various persons and press correspondents of England. A number of relevant questions like the nature of reforms suggested by the Congress were put and answered by the Congress

1 Ibid June 6 1890 p 147

2 A Professor of Presidency College and one of the founders of Calcutta University

3 Vide INDIA June 6 1890 p 148

representatives. Surendranath Banerjea explained to an English correspondent the Indian view point on the proposed reform scheme of the Congress and suggested that the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils should be partly on the elective basis.<sup>1</sup> The Journal INDIA became more active and propagated the problem of Council reform more vigorously. It also published the speeches addressed by the Congress delegates at various places and on different occasions on the question of reforms. It also published brief notes of interviews and articles on the subject. Thus this was an important feature of the Congress activity in England during this period.

Lord Lansdown, Sir Stuart Bayley and Sir Auckland Colvin had already lent their support to the introduction of the elective principle in the proposed Bill.<sup>2</sup> Hence a material change in the Bill in the House of Commons was being expected. This attitude of the British Parliamentarians encouraged the leaders of the Congress, and a vigorous propaganda was started to persuade influential members of Parliament to support the proposals of the Congress regarding the reform of the Council. The British Congress Committee issued a circular to the various political associations of liberal opinion seeking sympathy and support of their representatives in the Parliament for the reform of the council. The Committee wanted that the question of reform should not be made an issue of party politics but should be discussed on its merits.<sup>3</sup> The leaders of the British Committee and the members of the Congress deputation took full advantage of the opportunity afforded by the postponement of the second reading of the Bill. Personal contact, correspondence and other methods were adopted to create 'a well informed opinion' in the Parliament and to rally its support. In their letters to some of the prominent members of the Parliament, William Digby-the Secretary of the British Committee,<sup>4</sup> Sir Wedderburn-the Chairman and Dadabhai Naoroji emphasised the urgency of the Council reform and the introduction of representative form of Government as the solution of Indian problem. It is interesting to note that great liberal leader Gladstone was also persuaded to speak on elective principle. He

1. INDIA, June 6, 1890, p. 146.

2. Confidential Report of the Vernacular Newspapers of NWP HINDUSTAN (Kalakankar), May 18, 1890.

3. Vide Minutes of the British Committee Meeting October 2, 1890 (Vol. June 20, 1889-October 2, 1890).

4. Vide Minutes of the British Committee meeting January 25, 1891.

expressed his sympathy with the proposal<sup>1</sup> Wedderburn and Hume sent a letter to the Secretary of State for India making a strong plea "to consider the Indian Council Act Amendment Bill with special reference to the demand of the Congress including recognition of the elective principle"<sup>2</sup>

### Agitation In Parliament

The efforts of the British Committee led to some interesting results. Some of the members of the Parliament became interested in the demand of the Congress. Arnold Morley-the chief whip of the Liberal Party assured the British Committee to do his best for the Indian Council reform Bill. He issued a "three-lined whip" to all the Liberal members of the Parliament and requested them "to be in their places on the second reading of the Bill"<sup>3</sup>. When the Bill came up for discussion in the House of Commons, there was an interesting debate in which Congress point of view was explained by a number of members of Parliament. Samuel Smith, Swift Mac Neil, C. E. Schwann, Seaymour May who were "endeavouring to fight the cause of the Indian people, strongly supported the Congress claim for representative Government for India, and urged that the Bill should provide for election. A number of amendments were also moved. Important among those were the amendments moved by C. E. Schwann. His first amendment related to the introduction of elective principle. The second related to the increase of additional members of the Council<sup>4</sup>. The third amendment moved by him sought to give the councils the power to propose resolution when financial matters were under discussion<sup>5</sup>. These amendments were, however, ruled out. On such provisions of the Bill as the size of the councils and their functions, parties in Parliament were practically unanimous. The amendment pertaining to the recognition of elective principle, however, became the most controversial issue. Divergent views were expressed. Moving the amendment Schwann said "no reform of the Indian Council which does not embody the elective principle will prove to the Indian people incompatible with the good government of India"<sup>6</sup>. He also supported Congress claim

1 Ibid, February 10 1891 Resolution 3 p 10

2 Ibid, May 5 1891, pp 19 20 Resolution 3

3 Vide Minutes of the British Committee meeting February 10 1891 p 6

4 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) 23-4-1892, p 239

5 Ibid, p 281

6 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) 28 3 1892 p 68

of representing the political aspirations of India. Curzon, who was then the Under Secretary of State for India, opposed the amendment and held that Schwann had entirely ignored the primary conditions of Indian life. He maintained that for the illiterate and voiceless millions, who constituted the people of India, no system of representative government could be devised. He also held that 'Congress cannot be described as otherwise than a minute and almost microscopic minority of the total population of India.'<sup>1</sup> He, however, very cleverly pointed out that the Bill did not exclude such principles, as the method of election, a selection or delegation or whatever the particular phrase. Gladstone speaking for the opposition spoke at length on the amendment. He, however, deprecated any division on this question. He expressed the view that the "acceptance of the elective principle by the under Secretary though guarded and necessarily guarded was on the whole, not otherwise than a frank acceptance."<sup>2</sup> Curzon concurred in this interpretation and thus the elective principle was recognised without being embodied in the Act. The amendment was withdrawn and the Bill was passed and the Indian Councils Act of 1892 became a statute. It increased the size of the Supreme and Provincial Councils and allowed them the privilege of financial criticism and the right of interpellation. It, however, did not contain an explicit recognition of the principle of election. The process was described as nomination.<sup>3</sup>

The Indian National Congress at its annual session in 1892 accepted the Act in a 'loyal spirit' although it regretted that the Act did not 'concede to the people the right of electing their own representatives to the council.' Nevertheless it was generally regarded as the first victory of the Congress.<sup>4</sup> The success was attributed to the Congress campaign of propaganda in England.

### **Reform of Legislative Council, Second phase (1905-1910)**

The period between 1905-1910 represents the second phase of the Congress agitation in England for the reform of the Legislative Councils. It coincided with the administration of Morely-Minto. After the Indian Councils Act of 1892 the Congress asked for further

1. Ibid, 25-4-1892, pp. 131-132.

2. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) 25-4-1892, pp. 149-50.

3. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) Indian Councils Act 1861 Amendment Bill, 28-3-1892, p. 53.

4. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1892 Resolution I.

reforms but a clear and more insistent demand for a government of representative character was put forth in 1903 and was thereafter vigorously urged upon the British as the political problem of India which needed urgent attention. Several factors led to the intensification of propaganda campaign in England. Firstly the poor response from the British Parliament towards the Indian political problem was itself responsible to a great extent for promoting political discontent in India. The reform of the Council envisaged in the Indian Councils Act of 1892 was of very limited character. It was not intended as a step towards the establishment of representative Government so insistently urged by the Congress. The result was a growing discontent. It was felt that the activities of the Congress in England did not prove very effective in influencing the British public opinion. A section of the Congress leaders consequently began to express doubts regarding the futality of the method of direct appeal to the British.<sup>1</sup> A rift in the Congress was noticeable and in the early years of the 20th century, the militant wing in the Congress had come into being. Therefore the Congress leaders like Gokhale, Naoroji and Wedderburn too felt the need of a more vigorous and effective agitation for the constitutional reforms. Secondly political events in England in the early years of the 20th century constituted an important factor which gave an impetus to the value and importance of the Congress movement in England. The prospects of the victory of the Liberal Party in the General Elections of 1903 had a decisive influence on the course of the policy and activities of the Congress. It encouraged the Congress leaders to intensify their propagandist activities in England. They had an unshaken faith and confidence in the Liberals whom they thought sincere in their professions and respect, for the great principles of justice and righteousness. They were sure that the Liberals would really be glad if the political conditions of India could be improved without endangering the British supremacy.<sup>2</sup> Consequently the return to power of the Liberals and the appointment of John Morley as the Secretary of State for India was claimed by the Congress leaders to be the return of "Hope and Joy" for India. Some of them went to the extent of flattering Morley as the "Political Guru".<sup>3</sup> In the third place

1 Gokhale Papers, Gopal Me to Naoroji, September 3, 1893.

2 R. N. Mudholkar to D. E. Wacha, March 13, 1903, Gokhale Papers, File No. 569 Pt. III (Wacha Letters).

3 Report of the Indian National Congress 1903, pp. 34 and 63-66.

equally significant was the rise of Labour members as a new force in British politics with a radical approach towards most questions. They were a challenge to the conservatives who were hostile to the Congress demands and had ruled in England from 1885 to 1905. They pioneered a pro-India policy in the Commons during 1905-1910. They stood for a new political behaviour and for a re-consideration of the existing attitude towards India.<sup>1</sup> The Congress felt encouraged by the appearance of these English radicals as their sympathisers in the House of Commons.

Lastly the Morley-Minto politics to a certain extent encouraged the Congress leaders to intensify their agitation. Both Morley and Minto had become aware of the growth of a new spirit in India. They had shown an inclination for Sympathetic approach towards the Indian political problems. Within six months of taking office, Morley realised the need for some constitutional changes and wrote to Minto—the then Viceroy of India: "I wonder whether we could not now make a good start in the way of Reform in the popular direction..... the extension of the native element in your Legislative Council, ditto in Local Councils, full time for discussing Budget in your Legislative Council instead of four or five simple hours; right of moving amendments."<sup>2</sup> Minto readily fell in line with Morley but expressed the desire that the initiative should come from the Government. He appointed a committee to work out the details of the proposed reforms.<sup>3</sup> These developments stimulated the feelings of the Congress leaders to extend their activities to England.

Indian politicians were eager to know what the liberal British statesmen thought of Indian political aspirations.<sup>4</sup> The tone of the pronouncements by the Viceroy Lord Curzon as the spokesman of the Government had an irritating effect on Congress leaders. The Viceroy's words had begun to lose significance. They wanted to hear directly from British Parliament and the British policy makers. The statements of Secretary of State, debates in both Houses of Parliament and the opinion of the political parties were greatly awaited. The Congress leaders, therefore, began prepara-

1. Das, M. N.; *India Under Morley and Minto*, p. 63.

2. Morley; *Recollections* Vol. II, p. 174.

3. Wasti, Syed Razi; *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement, 1905-1910*, p. 23-26.

4. "India and English Party Politics" *Vide Indian Review* July 1905, p. 460, & October 1905, p. 679.



tions for placing their demand before the new Liberal Ministry. They hoped that new government would consider their claims sympathetically. William Wedderburn—the Chairman of the British Committee, had high expectations from the Liberals. He said that 'with a fresh Parliament, and an awakened national conscience the cause of India would have a just hearing'.<sup>1</sup> In the same tone Hume emphasised the need of sustained political activity. He exhorted Indian leaders to make the entire year through in India 'one great continuous Congress demonstration' and the whole year through in England 'to vibrate with incessant demands at public meetings'.<sup>2</sup>

### The demand for Representative Government

All these factors led the Congress leaders to extend its activities vigorously and to concentrate on political propaganda for its claims with greater force than before. During 1905 - 1910 the period of the administration of Minto and Morley, Congress was very active both in India and in England to push forward its demands with this hope that they could wrest political concessions from the Liberals in power. The congress, therefore, planned to work for a greater and well organised agitation for the establishment of representative Government of India. It is interesting to note that Lord Curzon, during his regime as Indian Viceroy, had predicted that Congress was tottering to its fall and he would 'assist it to a peaceful demise'.<sup>3</sup> His prediction however, proved untrue. Instead while Curzon hoped to see it dead in India, it was organising its work in Great Britain itself. In 1904, it decided to send a deputation to England and voted Rs 3000 to meet the necessary expenses of the deputation.<sup>4</sup> It also declared that 'time has arrived when the people of this country should be allowed a larger voice in the administration and control of the affairs of their country'. Three specific claims were made to secure this object. One of these borrowed from the French colonial system was directed to secure the representation in the House of Commons of each province of India. A second demand was for larger representation in the Legislative Councils with the right to decide these bodies on financial matters. While the third was for the appointment of Indian representatives as

1 Hindustan Review December 1903 p 471

2 A Call to Arms Wedderburn Naoroji Bonnerjee and Hume p 5

3 Curzon to Hamilton November 18 1900 Hamilton Collection

4 Report of the Indian National Congress 1904 Resolution IX

members of the Council of Secretary of State and the Viceroy.<sup>1</sup> These demands were repeated and developed in the year 1905. The tone of the Congress in 1905 was somewhat different. Councils were the main focus of criticism and establishment of representative government was emphatically demanded. In his vigorous speech Gokhale - the President of the session pressed for the reform of the Legislative Council and for a larger share in the administration and control of the Government by Indians.<sup>2</sup> A resolution embodying these demands was unanimously passed.<sup>3</sup> The establishment of representative government in India henceforth became the national demand of India.

### **Gokhale in England as delegate of the Congress (His first visit)**

The Congress felt that this demand should be pressed upon the attention of the British people for acceptance. For this purpose the Congress of 1905 authorised its President G. K. Gokhale to go to England as its delegate.<sup>4</sup> Gokhale had been to England in 1897 and his work was appreciated. Therefore the choice of the Congress fell on him. Gokhale arrived in England in April 1906. He stayed there for nearly four months. He described his "principal work, the tug of war." He soon entered upon "with the officials of India Council as to who would capture Mr. Morley's mind".<sup>5</sup> During the period of his stay in England Gokhale kept himself busy with delivering lectures, holding press conferences and interviewing authorities and public men. He was assisted by the British Committee which arranged public meetings and interviews. At many public meetings at Gloucester, Liverpool, Northampton and other parts of England, Gokhale explained the nature of the political demands advocated by the Congress. He could impress Englishmen like Crooks, M. P. who promised him that "he would be glad to be of use to India as far as it lay in his power."<sup>6</sup> But the most important event of Gokhale's visit was the long and cordial interviews with John Morley, the Secretary of State for India. Morley was so much pleased that he permitted Gokhale to see him for as

1. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1904, Res. IX.

2. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1905, pp. 16-17.

3. Ibid, Resolution II. p. 23.

4. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1905, Resolution XX.

5. Gokhale to Dravid, July 6, 1906 Gokhale Papers. File No. 203 Pt. I

6. Gokhale to Natesrao May, 18, 1906 : Gokhale Papers File No. 203, Pt. I.

many times as he wished <sup>1</sup> Thus Gokhale became very much confident of his success and felt a great relief in telling the ripeness of the time, and possibility of a sympathetic hearing from the British rulers for the Congress demand He hastened to write "I can express that I have come here at a time when Mr Morley's mind is in the fluid condition and his opinions on India are in process of forming."<sup>2</sup> On May 3, 1906, he addressed a meeting of the members of the Parliament organised by the Indian Parliamentary Committee, and pleaded for the reform of the Legislative Councils As a result 150 members of the Parliament signed a circular to support Indian movement and the Congress view in the Parliament <sup>3</sup> He suggested to Morley to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire whether the present association of the Indian people with the administration of their own affairs was adequate in view of their progress in education, if not what measures ought to be adopted to make it adequate Gokhale even suggested the size and nature of such a Commission This Commission, proposed by Gokhale, carried a specific object It would give an opportunity to Morley to study for himself the different questions pertaining to India which needed time and a definite lead <sup>4</sup> Morley received Gokhale's proposals favourably and made an announcement in the House of Commons on July 20, 1906 shadowing the inauguration of future reforms in India He said 'I do not know that I agree with all that Congress desires, but speaking broadly of which I conceive to be at the bottom of the Congress, I do not see why any one who takes a cool and steady view of Indian Government should be frightened' <sup>5</sup>

Gokhale's correspondence of that period indicates that he could impress Morley, and enlist his sympathy for Indian aspirations During his visit in 1906 Gokhale conferred with Morley five times and John Ellis, the then Under Secretary of State three times Morley spoke very freely of the difficulties and intentions In reporting his interview to the Viceroy Lord Minto Morley explained "My own impression formed long ago, and confirmed since I came to this office is that it will mainly depend upon ourselves whether the Congress is a power for good or for evil There it is,

1 Ibid May 10, 1906

2 Ibid, May 25 1906

3 Minutes of the British Committee Meeting May 8 1906

4 Vide Minutes of the British Committee July 6, 1906

5 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) 20 7 1906 p 586

whether we like it or not... Mr. Gokhale who is to stay in London until the end of the session, and I am in good hopes of finding him a help to me, and not a hinderance in guiding the strong currents of democratic feelings that are running breast high in the House of Commons.”<sup>1</sup> After his fourth interview with Morley, Gokhale assured his friends at home that “a further reform of Legislative Council has been definitely promised... and a general policy friendly to our aspirations will be pursued. We need not altogether be dissatisfied.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Gokhale's Second visit to England**

Gokhale visited England again in May 1908. With the active cooperation of the British Committee he worked hard to influence British opinion on the question of constitutional reforms. During his stay this time he concentrated his efforts on two principal things, firstly the debate to be raised in the House of Lords and secondly to mould the views of the India Council favourable to Indian reform schemes. For the first object he tried to persuade the members of the Parliament. He addressed a meeting, of the M. Ps, which was organised by the Indian Parliamentary Committee, and impressed upon them the need of reforms for India. For the second object, he interviewed Buchanan, the Under Secretary of State for India, Sir Lawrence Jenkins, Sir Walter Lawrence, Morrison and Bilgrami—all the members of the India Council and urged for the immediate grant of reforms. The result of these meetings, in Gokhale's own words was : “The proceedings were naturally confidential but you may take it from me that it has strengthened our position in the India Council in the matters of the forthcoming reforms.”<sup>3</sup>

He was not satisfied with this alone, he also addressed the journalists of London and Manchester for their support and sympathies. A number of them including Nevinson, Massingham and Gardiener all liberals assured him to lend their support to the Indian case. In such all engagements, Gokhale was usually assisted and accompanied by the members of the British Congress Committee. Gokhale's trip to England this time and his campaign for the reforms was a remarkable success. Wedderburn—the Chairman of the British Committee described the achievement of their efforts in this direction as ‘getting at the brain of the Liberal Party in London’.

1. Morley to Minto May 11, 1906, Morley Recollections II, p. 171.

2. Gokhale to Dravid, July 27, 1906, Gokhale Papers.

3. Gokhale to Vamanrao May 29, 1908: Gokhale Papers File No. 203, Vol. I.

The British Committee and Gokhale in particular also approached some of the influential Conservative members of the Parliament for the redress of the Congress demand. Gokhale interviewed Lord Percy, Lord Mayo, Lord Ripon, Lansdown, Cromer, Amphil, Middleton Brockwick, Courtney, Weardle, Reay and Lenington. But he was greatly disappointed and wrote in despair "I feel, I did not at all feel at home with these men—their ideas about India being derived mainly from official and Anglo-official sources. It is shy when you talk to those men, then you realise the advantage of having to deal with Liberal, Radical or Labour representatives"<sup>1</sup>

However Gokhale's services to the constitutional agitation for reforms were remarkable. William Wedderburn—the Chairman of the British Committee—applauded for his great contribution when he wrote to Bhupendranath Basu. He said 'Not only has he had direct access to the inmost seat of power, and has gained the full confidence of the Liberal Party and their distors, but he has the opportunity of softening and securing conciliating our Tory opponents'<sup>2</sup>. Gokhale's significant role in pushing forward Congress demand in England was duly recognised by the British Committee of the Congress. It congratulated Gokhale "on his good work done for his countrymen in England", and placed on record "its great appreciation of his disinterested and public spirited labours on behalf of India". It resolved "On all hands it is agreed that he has exercised as regards Indian affairs, a most important influence on British public opinion, on Members of Parliament, and upon Members of Government, and he has set forth the needs and aspirations of India with force and clearness and at the same time with tact and courtesy towards opponents"<sup>3</sup>

### Council Reform Bill in Parliament

The Congress leaders in England in cooperation with the Indian Parliamentary Committee sought to arouse the interest of the Parliament in the proposed constitutional reforms. The members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee kept themselves well informed and in close touch with the Indian leaders. Consequently Indian debates in the Parliament whether formidable or not, with or without

1 Gokhale to Vamanrao July 17 1903 Gokhale Papers Vol II

2 Wedderburn Correspondence Wedderburn to Basu August 6 1903 Gokhale Papers File No 579 Part III

3 Minutes of the British Committee Meeting August 28 1906, Vol July 1901–Oct 1909

the test of a division demanded the constant attention of the Government. When Morley announced in the House of Commons the proposals of constitutional reforms Dr. H. V. Rutherford, a leading member of the Committee spoke at length pointing out that the scheme of reform was "neither wide nor extensive". However he saw in it "the opening of the door to better things."<sup>1</sup> He prepared a draft which he proposed to move in the House of Commons on Jan. 19, 1908. It had the support of a number of Parliamentarians such as J. D. Rees, John Ellis, Hobhouse, M. O. Gradey and Earl Percy. The amendment was in the following terms: That in the opinion of this House the present condition of affairs in India demands the immediate and serious attention of His Majesty's Government, that the present proposals of the Government of India, are inadequate to all the existing and growing discontent, and that comprehensive measures of reform are imperatively necessary in the direction of giving the people of India control over their own affairs."<sup>2</sup> When the Government was faced with an Indian debate Rutherford moved the amendment. No division, however, took place. When the debate was over Morley proclaimed, 'No bones broken, no blood shed and no light shed either.'<sup>3</sup>

When the Indian Councils Bill was presented in the House of Lords on February 17, 1909 the debate in the House was quite lively. A number of notable Lords "both by understanding and by personal knowledge and experiences" took part in deliberations and made interesting speeches about Indian administration. More prominent among them were Mac Donnell, Reay and Cromer.<sup>4</sup> Lord Curzon was, however, the strongest opponent of the Bill.<sup>5</sup> The House was full for Morley. On the whole his Government got much support and escaped without division. When the Bill reached the House of Commons, Henry Cotton and other members of the Parliamentary Committee raised discussion. But the criticism in the House of Commons came to nothing. The debate on the Bill in the Commons failed to generate the interest which the importance of the subject demanded. The benches were empty. At one time there were about fourteen members on the Government benches

1. Parliamentary Debates, (House of Commons) Vol. 175, May-June 1907, Col. 913.

2. Minutes of the British Committee, Meeting Jan. 28. 1908.

3. M. N. Das; India under Morley and Minto, p. 73.

4. Morley Collections; Morley to Minto, Feb. 26, 1909.

5. Wasti, Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement- p. 198.

and eight on the other side. The debate was spiritless.<sup>1</sup> The views of the House of Lords dominated by the Conservatives prevailed. The Radicals were left in the lurch. The Liberals claimed victory. On May 1909 the Bill became an Act. It modified the previous India Councils Acts of 1861 and 1892, provided for the enlargement of the Legislative Councils, introduced elective element and increased the powers of the council. Nevertheless it was by no means a serious departure from the Acts preceding it and was not intended to set up a parliamentary institution. Morely declared in the Parliament, 'If I were attempting to set up a Parliamentary system in India or if it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily up to the establishment of a Parliamentary system in India I, for one, would have nothing to do with it.' Political opinion in England on the issue of Council Reform was not divided and hence remained uninfluenced by the problem posed by the Congress propaganda. British politics regarding India apart from the Press entered a dull phase towards the close of Morley-Minto period. Nevertheless the Congress leaders continued their faith in the success of their agitation in England. At the annual session of the Congress, held in 1908 Cokhale moved a resolution of thanks to A. O. Hume, Wedderburn and the British Committee for their strenuous efforts in the direction of reforms and the constitutional agitation in England. As the reforms announced by Morley were a partial fruition of the efforts made by the Congress during the last twenty three years, they must have been a source of satisfaction to the Congress workers in England specially to Hume and Wedderburn.<sup>2</sup>

### Indianisation of Services

The question of the Indianisation of the Civil Services was a significant issue closely related to the Congress demand for the political advancement of the Country. From the very beginning the Congress demanded association of a larger number of Indians in the public services, and the holding of Civil Service Examinations in India and in England simultaneously. The demand was repeated year after year,<sup>3</sup> to influence British opinion on the issue. Consequently

1. Warr: *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement*, p. 199.

2. *Parliamentary Debates House of Lords* December 17, 1908, Col. 1983.

3. *Report of the Indian National Congress, 1908*, Resolution XVII.

4. *Report of the Indian National Congress 1883*, Resolution IV, 1888 Resolution II, 1889 and 1891, Resolution, V.

Wedderburn and Dadabhai Naoroji projected an agitation for the Civil Service question. Parliament was the main front where the battle was fought. On persuasion of Wedderburn and Naoroji, Sir Herbert Paul—a member of the Liberal Party moved resolution for the simultaneous examinations, on June 2, 1893.<sup>1</sup> With this the question of the Indianisation of the Civil Service assumed sudden importance. Naoroji, while supporting the resolution of Paul, charged the Government of 'having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart' the words of promises and pledges from time to time. He stated: "The application to natives of the competitive system as conducted in England, and the recent reduction in the age.....are all so many deliberate and transparent subterfuges."<sup>2</sup> Sir William Wedderburn expressed similar views, and urged upon the Government to put Indians and Englishmen on equal footing in order to escape an allegation of breach of faith."<sup>3</sup>

The labour of Naoroji and Wedderburn bore fruits, and the resolution was carried in somewhat thin House securing a narrow majority. 84 members had voted for the resolution and 76 in against. The House then resolved: "That all the competitive examinations heretofore, held in England alone for appointment to the Civil Services of India, shall henceforth be held simultaneously both in India and England, such examinations, being identical in their nature, and all who compete being finally classified in one list according to merit."<sup>4</sup> This was inspite of the efforts made by the Government to prevent its supporters from voting for the motion.<sup>5</sup> In opposing the resolution George Russell—the Under Secretary of State for India employed all such arguments as had been advanced by its opponents earlier. He dwelt at length on the depressing effects of this resolution declared it not to a wise step in regard to a sound administration.<sup>6</sup> Lord Cross expressed the opinion that Government should have atonce taken steps to rescind the resolution.<sup>7</sup> Salisbury remarked that he could not imagine any project more fatal to the Indian Empire than that of identical examination.<sup>8</sup>

On adoption of the resolution by the House of Commons, the

1. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) June 2, 1893, pp. 132-33.

2. Ibid, 113.

3. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) June 2, 1893, pp. 133-34.

4. Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons) 64, 869 c. 7075.

5. Kimberlay to Lansdown June 9, 1893: Lansdown Papers.

6. Parliamentary Debates (Commons) June 2, 1893, 355.

7. Ibid June 13, 1893, 385.

8. Parliamentary Debates (Commons) June 2, 1893, p. 339.



Congress hailed it as a 'signal victory' of the principal for which educated India had been demanding. The Congress at its Lahore session 1893 recorded its gratitude to the British House of Commons for their just and wise vote in regard to the simultaneous examinations in England and in India.<sup>1</sup> But since the attitude of the British was of indifference and of hesitation, the resolution did not receive the approval of the then Secretary of State for India H. H. Fowler. He sent the resolution to the Government of India for its careful consideration and report. The Government of India characterised the proposal as 'ill admired and dangerous'.<sup>2</sup> The general enthusiasm thus received a setback to learn that the Resolution was nothing more than the snapping of vote. Dadabhai Naoroji, on behalf of the British Committee, deplored the British policy and attitude of the British officials. He accused the Government "You add insult to the injury. After stultifying our growth, our mental and moral capacity, we are told that we are not capable."<sup>3</sup> Even in India the official attitude was viewed with great anxiety and dissatisfaction.

In the year 1894, the Civil Service question was however, raised again. With the formation of the Indian Parliamentary Committee in July 1893, the members of the British Committee renewed the issue with greater vigour and force. Herbert Paul, who had earlier initiated the move, asked the members of the House as to what the objection was in not holding the Civil Service examination simultaneously in India and in England. He pleaded with force "We have adopted the competitive system, and held out to the natives of India the prospect of rising as high as their abilities and characters, can enable them to rise in the administration of their country, and at the same time we insist on imposing on them these restrictions which largely interfere with, and almost nullify the prospects which we otherwise hold out to them."<sup>4</sup> But the British, whether Conservative or Liberals were unanimous on the question of Indianisation of services, and refused to grant any concession to the Indians. The question was, however, not given up and it was pursued by the British Committee and the Indian Parliamentary Committee as well. Both were successful in pur

1 Report of the Indian National Congress 1893 Resolution V p. 71

2 Flgnto Fowler July 17 1894 Fowler Papers Microfilm Reel 1 (3 Vols)  
MSS EUR C 145/1 3

3 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) 20 9 1893 1762

4, Ibid, 15th August 1894, 1101

suading J. D. Rees.—A Labour member of the Parliament, who at a later date—in 1918 evoked the British Parliament for the arrangement of the simultaneous recruitment in India and England under the provisions of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

The promoters of the Congress movement in England also adopted the method of persuasion and sought interviews in order to convince the British on the need of Indianisation of services. In spite of serious setback with their propaganda on this issue, the members of the British Committee did not abandon their vigorous activity but even decided to carry on agitation with renewed vigour.<sup>1</sup> A number of members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee held an interview with the Secretary of State Sir Fowler in (June 1894). They enquired whether something could be done to mitigate the bitter disappointment which would be felt in India at the action of the Government. But the Secretary of State kept himself silent, and gave no favourable assurance.<sup>2</sup> Again in 1897, Surendranath Banerjea, who was in England then as a witness to the Welby Commission, approached Sir Fowler for his sympathy and support on the question of employment of the Indians in the public services. But this time too, Fowler condemned the idea of simultaneous examinations for political reasons. However, Banerjea argued: "I think, I can understand your hesitation so far as the Indian Civil Service is concerned, but why do you object to simultaneous examination, for what are called the minor civil services." On this Fowler gave no reply. He was perhaps convinced. Taking the advantage of the situation, Banerjea said at last: "Sir Henry, when you are again Secretary of State, you must be prepared to receive a representation from us urging this view."<sup>3</sup>

This agitation of Civil Service was also pushed by means of correspondence with the British officials and leaders. William Wedderburn—the Chairman of the British Committee and the Indian Parliamentary Committee as well endeavoured to press the then Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon on the need of Indianisation of services. In 1900, he asked the Viceroy to employ Indians in the higher ranks of services. But his claim was turned down on

1. Vide Minutes of the British Committee, May 29, 1894 (Vol. January 2, 1894 - December 1, 1896).

2. Vide Minutes of the British Committee, 5th June, 1896 (Wedderburn's report to the member of the British Committee).

3. Banerjea, S. N. : A Nation In Making, p. 141.

the pretext that "because they are not competent, and because it is our constant experience that when placed in authority, if an emergency occurs, they lose their heads or abdicate together"<sup>1</sup>

Dadabhai Naoroji entered into correspondence with the Secretary of State George Hamilton. On October 12, 1900 he sent a letter to Hamilton along with a cutting from KAISER-I-HIND of September 16, 1900 in illustration of the strong feelings in India against the violation of pledges of equality as regards admission to the services of the State. He wrote "New generations have received the blessings of education and they now realise the present un-British violation of all pledges however marked, it is by misleading plausible statements you will see that there is a panic that the authorities were tending towards stopping even in England the competition of Indians for the Civil Service, and that the subtle encroachments on the various other services are but a prelude to that disaster"<sup>2</sup> Naoroji sent several such letters to Hamilton conveying the feelings of the educated Indians in regard to the Civil Service question but all efforts were of no avail. The Conservative leaders then in power, remained unconvinced and unaffected. Hamilton even ended the correspondence with the Indian leaders regarding this matter.<sup>3</sup>

Though the results of the agitation and propaganda carried on by the British Committee on this issue were not encouraging, but the Indian National Congress continued to repeat the demand with its deep regret, that 'no satisfactory solution of the question is possible unless effect is given to the resolution of the House of Commons of the 2nd June 1893 in favour of holding the examinations for the Indian Civil Services simultaneously both in England and India'<sup>4</sup>

Thus judged by the results of the efforts of the British Committee, and the Indian Parliamentary Committee, this can be said that very little was achieved for the redress of grievance of the Congress in regard to the question of Civil Service. They could only cry in protest, yet their loud protest was of no avail, as the

1 Curzon to Hamilton April 3, 1900 Hamilton Collection (Private Correspondence) Vol XVI, XVII, XVIII Microfilm Reel 9 EUR MSS Collection

2 Quoted in R. P. Masani's Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India p. 457-58

3 Hamilton Collection, Microfilm Reel 2 Encl. to Hamilton's letter to Curzon Dec. 13, 1900

4 Vide Dept. of Home (Pub. A) Prog. 55-58 of April 1902 Congress Resolutions of 1901

British policy on Indianisation of Services was firm. This policy was inspired by important considerations of efficiency and imperial interests.

### Economic Problems

Although political problems were the main consideration of the Congress agitation, yet from the very beginning its leaders were also much concerned with the economic problems of the country. They strongly criticized the policies and attitude of the British Government on economic issues, and made protests against the increasing impoverishment, excessive taxation, wastage on military, drain of wealth from the Country, unjust charges and other burdens.<sup>1</sup> Besides the Congress organisation was lucky in having its leaders several notable economists like Dadabhai Naoroji, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Gopal Krishan Gokhale, Mahadeo Govind Ranade, Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, Pherozshah Mehta and R. N. Mudholkar. They, from time to time, displayed their genius in dealing with economic matters.<sup>2</sup> Therefore the champions of the Congress in England broadened the scope of their activity by allying economic questions in their political programme. Consequently the British Committee agitated for the solution of economic problems until the close of the 19th century.

The agitation on economic issues was mainly confined to Parliament. There is little evidence to show that the issue was agitated from Platform, and a very little was done through Press except discussing economic matters in the columns of INDIA.

The frequency of famines during 1885-1909 was the main question which affected vast regions of British India, and resulted in a miserable condition of the Indian masses. Sir Wedderburn and Naoroji spoke on the subject in the Parliament. Wedderburn explained the nature and magnitude of the famine, and asked the members of the Parliament to take note of the sufferings of the masses and to prepare a way for healing measures to bring back peace and prosperity. He stated: 'The fact is this that the people of India

1. Vide Department of Home (Public-A) Progs, 55-58 of April 1902: Resolutions of the Congress and its Reports from year to year 1885 onwards.

2. Some of these leaders had to their credit distinguished contributions to the study of economic problems of India. For example R. C. Dutt's 'The Economic History of India' and 'India in the Victorian Age'; and Dadabhai's 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India' are the outstanding works. Similarly Gokhale's evidence before the Welby Commission in 1897 is a proof of his rich knowledge of economic affairs.

have during the past year suffered from almost every possible calamity—famine, plague, war and earthquake—and these sufferings have aggravated by the very measures taken for their relief. Under these circumstances what is now wanted so much are words of sympathy, and acts of sympathy from the authorities to the people of India so that their minds may be soothed, and they may bear up under their trials and affections.”<sup>1</sup> Another member of the Indian Parliamentary Committee Samuel Smith rose to call attention to the extreme poverty of Indian masses, to the serious condition of the Indian finances, and to the need of more control over Indian expenditure.<sup>2</sup> In 1891 he moved a resolution seconded by Naoroji which pressed for a full and independent Parliamentary inquiry into the conditions and wants of Indian people, their financial difficulties. Both Wedderburn and Naoroji repeatedly brought to the notice of the Parliament the miserable situation in India, and appealed to adopt a merciful view. The endless Frontier wars and the tendency to push the outposts of the Empire further and further entailing large expenses on the military was also the subject of criticism in the House of Commons. William Wedderburn claimed that by general consent in India, the policy had proved to be ‘wrong in principle and had disastrous result’. He illustrated the subject and mentioned that the conquest of Burma undertaken purely for Imperial interests had been placed upon the Indians, who were opposed entirely to the whole operation. He estimated the cost to £12,500,000 for the operation to be charged annually at the rate of about £1,500,000 from India.<sup>3</sup> Another Congress representative in the Parliament raised his voice against the British policy which was unjust and partial to Indian subjects. He complained that the treasury and the India Office, though agreed to £257,000—the amount to be paid by the British Exchequer, since the apportionment was made. But it was not followed in practice, and thus the Indian people and Government were cheated by the British Treasury.<sup>4</sup> In August 1894 there was a three day’s debate in the House of Commons on the financial condition of India. Wedderburn, Naoroji and H. Paul, members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee

1 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) 17-2 1893 990

2 Ibid, 22-2-1893, 1383 84

3 Natesan, G. A. & Co. Madras Speeches And Writings of Sir William Wedderburn, p. 61

4 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) 25-2 1901, 1115 Speech of W. S. Cairne

took part. The Secretary of State wrote to the Viceroy, "There is a very strong feeling with reference to the cotton duties but I am satisfied that any attempt to impose those duties without a countervailing excise duty, would raise very serious difficulties here." The Parliament, thus, was repeatedly reminded of its duties and liabilities towards the Indian people. The members of the Parliament were asked to do something more for the Indian people beyond that of passive spectators, however sympathetic.

Apart from its agitational work in the British Parliament, the British Committee of the Congress availed of such opportunities like evidence before the Inquiry Commission to propagate its views on economic problems. The proceedings of the Royal Commission appointed in 1895 provided an opportunity to impress and convince the British rulers on the question of miseries and the economic condition of the Indian people.<sup>1</sup> They presented facts and statistics to prove the systematic impoverishment of India as well as the injustice of financial burdens thrust on the shoulders of India.<sup>2</sup> Another important aspect of the economic issue, which the British Committee and the Congress representatives in England took up for discussion was the 'drain of wealth' to England a consequence of the foreign rule on which the foundation of England's economic prosperity was built up. Out of this drain India received nothing in return. As early as 1867 Dadabhai Naoroji brought out this theory in his speeches before the London India Society and the East India Association. In 1902 this idea was further developed by him in his book 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India' in which he dwelt upon the costliness of existing system of administration which entailed an annual drain of thirty millions sterling without any corresponding return.<sup>3</sup> William Digby and R. C. Dutt, prominent Congress leaders in England developed the same idea in their works 'Prosperous British India' and 'India in the Victorian Age' and 'The Economic History of India' respectively. William Digby estimated the total drain upto the end of the

1. A Royal Commission was appointed in 1895 to inquire into the administration and management of the Military and Civil expenditure incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State for India or of the Govt. of India, and the apportionment of charges between the U. K. and India. W. Wedderburn, D. Naoroji, W. S. Caine sat on the Commission as members; and G. K. Gokhale, G. Subramania, S. N. Banerjea, D. E. Wacha were the Indian witnesses.

2. Evidence of Gokhale, April 13, 1897, R. C. Q. no. 18237-45, 1871. Also evidence of Dadabhai Naoroji March 25, 1897, Q. Nos. 16825-31.

3. Naoroji, Dadabhai, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*; p. 211, Also Lajpat Rai's *Unhappy India*, p. 324.

19th century at £60,080 millions<sup>1</sup> Mc Laren-a member of the Indian Parliamentary Committee also pointed out that 'all the resources of India may be said to be mortgaged to this country'<sup>2</sup>

Thus the Congress leaders in England apprised the British people of the economic difficulties through their writings. However the Congress agitators did not receive a favourable response to their propaganda work on economic issues. No doubt they attempted at mobilising British public opinion in India's favour, but the results were far from encouraging as the British policy on economic matters was always guided by the Imperial interests and maintenance of the Empire.

The Congress with its emphasis on British methods of political agitation during its early phase did not succeed in persuading the British to accede to its demand of representative form of government in India. From 1885 to 1917<sup>3</sup> there was a continuous manifestation of the same spirit by the Conservatives as well as by the Liberals to govern India by a bureaucratic system of administration. There was yet no division in British politics on Indian issue like that on Irish question. Imperial consideration rather than the political problem was still the dominating factor in determining the British policy towards India. Nonetheless the activities of the Congress in England in its early phase led to some interesting results. The old order of the British approach towards India had not changed yielding place to new all at once. Yet the events of 1892 and particularly of 1905-1910 indicate that the call to yield was sounded. In 1892 the idea of representative government for India was merely a theoretical issue confined to the speeches of few British leaders and statesmen. In the early years of the 20th Century it began to appear on the horizon of the Political thinking of the British. It was prominently discussed in the Parliament and figured largely in the official correspondence. The traditional division in British politics conservatives, liberals and radicals began to clash on matters of Indian policy. The rise of Labourites and the Socialists with new political philosophy had an impact on the traditional imperialist attitude and sought to bring the ruling party nearer to an appreciation of the needs of the ruled. The political concessions granted to India by the British in the form of Reforms of 1909-10

1 Digby, William Prosperous British India p 348

2 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) April 3, 1900 1103

3 In 1917 the British Government announced its object of introducing in India responsible form of Self government.

show that there was the beginning of a change in British attitude from its emphasis on efficiency and imperialist consideration to a regard for self-government. Some of the demands of the Congress were partially fulfilled. The Législative Councils were expanded. The elective element was introduced. Indians were admitted into the council of the Secretary of State and into the Executive Council of the Viceroy. In the economic field questions of agricultural improvement and the increasing military and other expenditure began to receive greater attention from the Government. The enactment of cooperative societies Act was a distinct advance in the welfare of the people.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless the indifference of the British towards the future of India and their reluctance to keep pace with political aspirations of India, the encouragement to such separatist tendencies as the rise of Muslim League complicated the matters. The Congress which had by-now grown in strength resolved to raise India's political status in the Empire as a self-governing unit. The agitation for this ideal forms the subject matter of the next chapter.

1. Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during the years 1911-1914, pp. 4-5 and 272.



**A**FTER the Morley Minto Reforms the next distinct phase of the Congress agitation in England was marked by its demand of Responsible Government within the Empire or Home Rule as Mrs Besant and Tilak preferred to call it. This demand was officially articulated by the Congress after the world war first in 1914 and was pressed upon the British vigorously for acceptance. The British attitude was to postpone all positive action until the end of the war. But magnitude of the Congress efforts and the vigour of its propagandist activities made this impossible. This constituted India's political problems with which the British were now faced.

### **The emergence of the demand for Responsible Government**

After the Morley Minto Reforms constitutional progress in India did not keep pace with the growing aspirations of politically minded Indians. The reforms of 1909 which Morley had hoped would suffice for a generation exhausted their utility even by 1913. They were no longer acceptable to Indian opinion and in the light of experience official opinion also viewed them with critical eye<sup>1</sup>. It was widely recognised that no further progress was possible without effecting new constitutional changes. The representation of Indians in the Legislative Councils under the Reform Act of 1909 had reached a point at which the question of responsible government in India was bound to arise. Therefore the change in the emphasis of Congress demand from Representative institutions to responsible government was inevitable.

Several factors were responsible for the demand. First and foremost was the impact of first World War which broke out in 1914. The war, as a cotemporary official record observed, became "a

1 Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms 1918, p. 48

dominating factor in the situation."<sup>1</sup> India's loyal service were widely appreciated by the British. This aroused high expectations in India. The British Prime Minister and responsible statesmen declared with special emphasis that in future the Indian question would be considered from a new angle of vision. Their talk of liberty and right of self-determination to nations large or small were taken by the leaders of the Congress at their face value. They believed in self-government for India within the range of attainment in the near future. As a consequence of this, the leaders of the Congress set before themselves the aim of asserting India's right to a place among the self-governing nations of the British empire.<sup>2</sup>

It would, however, be wrong to assume that the demand for responsible government originated with the War. A study of the contemporary events shows that there were definite signs of unrest in this direction even before the war broke out. The war only accelerated the pace of the development of this sentiment and crystalised it into a definite demand for responsible government.

It must be remembered that at the time of the passing of the Reform Act of 1909 Lord Morley had expressly disclaimed any suggestion that he was setting up a parliamentary system of government. Despite this disclaimer of Lord Morley, educated Indians set before themselves the ideal of Parliamentary self-government. They had welcomed the Morley-Minto scheme of reforms as an advance towards their desired ideal. But in demanding responsible self-government Indian leaders were indulging in generalities. No specific scheme of self-government was put forth by them. A notable indication in this direction came from the publication of Lord Hardinge's despatch of 25th August, 1911 to the Secretary of State for India. In it there occurred a passage which was interpreted by Indian leaders as foreshadowing the gradual evolution of responsible self-government in India. In this passage it was observed that to the government of India it appeared that the "only possible solution" of India's demand for a larger share in the administration "was gradually to give the provinces a larger measure of self-government, until at last India would consist of a number of administrations, autonomous in all provincial affairs

1. Summary of the Administration of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, Nov. 1910 - March 1916, p. 20.

2. Report of the Administration of Lord Chelmsford Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1916-1921 Vol. I, p. 18.

with the Government of India above them all and possessing power to interfere in cases of mis government, but ordinarily restricting their functions to matters of Imperial concern"<sup>1</sup>

The despatch was published on December 12, 1911 and was at once seized upon by Indian nationalists as indicating the aim and intention of the British Government in India. They concluded that the satisfaction of their demand for responsible government could be provided for in the provincial sphere. Consequently they set before themselves the ideal of Provincial autonomy as their immediate objective. When the Congress assembled in its annual session in 1912 this demand was put forth vigorously from its platform and was embodied in a resolution unanimously passed.<sup>2</sup> A storm of controversy raged for a few months in England over the passage in the Despatch. The opposition in Parliament accused the Liberal Government of contemplating the introduction of some kind of responsible Government of India. The Secretary of State for India Lord Crewe repeatedly denied the charge. He referred to the controversial passage in the despatch as a casual remark. He declared in the Parliament, "I see no future for India on these lines." Pointing out the impossibility of such experiment to "a race which is not our own" he said, "It is my duty as Secretary of State to repudiate the idea that the Despatch implies anything of the kind as the hope or the goal of the policy of the government."<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that in spite of this authoritative disclaimer Indian leaders did not feel discouraged. They clung to their demand. Not only the Congress insisted on the demand, the All India Muslim League also adopted in 1912 as one of its objectives, 'The attainment of a system of self-government suitable for India'.<sup>4</sup> This was a significant development in Indian politics. The change in the attitude of the Muslim League which had hitherto worked mainly for the interest of the Muslims "brightened the hopes of joint and concerted action for national good".<sup>5</sup>

The notable outcome of this change was that a united demand for responsible Government for India within the Empire had begun

1 The Coronation Darbar Despatch dated 23rd August 1911, Vide Indian Constitutional Documents Vol I, P Mukherji, p 451

2 Report of the Indian National Congress, 1912, pp 83-91, Resolution on Provincial Autonomy No VII

3 Parliamentary Debates, (House of Lords) June 12, 1912, pp 155-6

4 The Indian Review, Jan 1913, p 54

5 Report of the Indian National Congress, 1913, Resolution IV, (Union for Self-government of Congress and Muslim League)

to take shape even before the outbreak of World War first. Bhupendra Nath Basu who presided over the session of the Congress held in 1914 gave public expression to this demand when he said, "Neither separation nor subordination was wanted but joint partnership on equal terms. The constitution of India should be modelled on that of the United States of America or the Commonwealth of Australia modified to suit India and with a representative of the Crown at its head."<sup>1</sup> The demand of responsible government within the empire was embodied in the resolution which appealed to the government to redeem 'the pledges of Provincial Autonomy contained in the despatch of the 25th August 1911 and to take "such measures as may be necessary for the recognition of India as a component part of a federated empire in the full and the free enjoyment of the rights belonging to that status."<sup>2</sup> Sir Satyendra Sinha in his Presidential address delivered to the 1915 session of the Congress reiterated that self-government within the empire was the goal of Indian nationalism and appealed to the British people 'to declare their ungrudging approval of the goal' to which 'Indians aspired'. He demanded an "authentic and definite proclamation," of Britain's resolve to lead India to self-government.<sup>3</sup> Lord Chelmsford revealed later that the "ball was set rolling" by Sinha's remarkable address to the Congress in December 1915.<sup>4</sup> It apparently inspired him and many others to think about the goal of British Policy in India and to realize the need for its announcement. In a resolution unanimously passed, the Congress expressed the "opinion that the time has arrived to introduce further and substantial measures of reform towards the attainment of self-government as defined in Article I of its constitution and demanded immediately the introduction of Provincial Autonomy including financial independence."<sup>5</sup>

In October 1916 nineteen elected Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council presented to the Viceroy a memorandum. These members included representatives of both the Hindu and the Muslim opinion and their memorandum embodied a list of reforms

1. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1914, pp. 22-24.

2. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1914, Resolution on Self-government, No. X.

3. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1915, pp. 21-30.

4. Setalvad, C. H.; *Recollections and Reflections* (1946), p. 284.

5. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1914 Resolution on Self-Government, pp. 115-16.

which they considered should be undertaken with reference to the Constitution of the Government of India on the lines of responsible Government after the War. The general outline of the scheme fascinated the Congress and the Muslim League both of which had previously agreed to evolve a joint scheme of constitutional reforms. It was taken by both the organisations as the basis and was made more comprehensive.<sup>1</sup> It was then put forth as their united demand.

Meanwhile movement demanding Home Rule for India initiated by Mrs Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak came prominently into notice towards the end of 1915 and instantly attracted the attention of the younger generation of the Indian politicians. It soon gathered to itself a wide following and was turned into a living political agitation for responsible government by the whirlwind campaigns of Mrs Besant and Tilak. Both of them founded Home Rule League and made the Congress League Scheme as the chief plank of their agitation.<sup>2</sup> As a result of these developments the Congress, the Muslim League and the Home Rule League organisations committed themselves to the ideal of responsible self-government in India.

### The British opinion on the goal of British rule in India

Political uneasiness in India and the controversial character of Morley-Minto reforms also attracted the attention of the British opinion and change in the English men's thinking about India's future is discernable by the utterances of British people. As early as 1908 the Bishop of Southampton inquired whether the English administrators in India ever cared to think where their work in India was leading to. He pleaded for a meeting of minds of the Indians and the British on the subject of the future goal and definite acceptance by the British people of the Indian ideal of a self government.<sup>3</sup> The radicals in England demanded that the issue should not be postponed any longer. In July 1910 Josiah Wedgwood asked in the Commons, "Do we actually want India sometime to be free and self governing or do we not?" He urged upon the Government the need of defining the goal of British policy towards India.<sup>4</sup> The gradual change in the British thinking is

1 Report of the Administration of Lord Chelmsford Vol I pp 61-62

2 Report of the Administration of Lord Chelmsford Vice Roy and Governor General of India 1916-1921 Vol I p 60

3 Politics and Society in India Ed C H Philips, p 75

4 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), 19th July, 1910, 2013-4

also indicated by the observations of the British administrators in India. In 1912 another distinguished member of Indian Civil Service Sir James Meston put forth the view, "Do we intend to give her (India) self-government or to hold her permanently in the status of a subject country?" He emphasised, "Self-government, being one of the characteristics of our civilizations, must become one of the ideals at which our rule in India is to aim."<sup>1</sup> Commenting upon despatch of August 1911 E. S. Montague-the Under Secretary of State for India pointed out that "the British Government could not drift on for ever without stating a policy." He added that the British had hitherto avoided to face the growing aspirations of Indians. "At last, and not too soon, a Viceroy has had the courage to state the trend of British policy in India and the lines upon which we propose to advance."<sup>2</sup> Lord Hardinge who came to India as Viceroy in 1910 was fully alive and sympathetic to the new political developments in India. In his address to the Imperial Legislative Council on March 24, 1916, he said, "I do not for a moment wish to discount self-government as a national ideal. It is perfectly legitimate aspiration and has the warm sympathy of all moderate men."<sup>3</sup>

At the same time a group of intellectuals and politicians in England, known as Round Table Group, which was busy investigating the possibilities of Imperial Federation during the autumn of 1915, recognised self-government as conceivable goal although the definition of this goal was kept ambiguous. "The only meaning of self-government as a goal which bore the test of examination was responsible government for India within the Commonwealth which could not stop short of those by which the Dominions had reached their present position."<sup>4</sup> These developments encouraged the Indian leaders' demand of responsible self-government.

A further idea of the change which had come over the opinions in official circle can be gathered from the fact that the whole work of the framers of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report depended upon the assumption that Parliamentary government was India's inevi-

1. Meston; Memorandum on India and the Empire (Unpublished) quoted in *Politics and Society in India*, p. 76.

2. Montagu : *Speeches on Indian Questions* (1918) pp. 247-59.

3. *Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council 1916-1917*, Vol. LIV, p. 559.

4. Curtis : *L. Dyarchy, Papers Relating to the Application of the Principle of Dyarchy to the Government of India* (Oxford 1920), p. 83-93.

table destiny<sup>1</sup> Immediately after his arrival in April 1916, the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford at the very first meeting of his Executive Council held in May 1916 raised the question of 'the goal of British rule in India and the steps on road to that goal' The deliberation of the Council led to the conclusion that 'the endowment of British India as an integral part of the British Empire with self-government was the goal of British rule' and that an advance towards this goal should be made along three roads, viz the development of local self government, more responsible employment of Indians in the administration, and the expansion of provincial Legislative Councils<sup>2</sup>

As a result of Lord Chelmsford's personal interest in the question of Constitutional Reforms, a despatch containing final proposals of Reforms with comments of the Local Government was sent in November 1916 to the Secretary of State for the consideration of His Majesty's Government The details of the proposals were not disclosed<sup>3</sup> These developments were however the indications of the change that had taken over the opinion of the British official community. Indian leaders were therefore anxious to put their case before the Government The whole atmosphere of the time, observed a government report, favoured the proposals of reforms on the lines of responsible self-government<sup>4</sup>

### The demand of responsible Self government

As a result of these developments political situation in India in 1916 was extremely delicate For two years Indians had rendered noteworthy services to the war They were eagerly waiting for the official pronouncement of the recognition of their political status But nothing was done to satisfy their expectations and the British cabinet gave no indication of the place which would be found for India in the new scheme This aroused suspicion in the minds of educated Indians and there was growing an apprehension lest the "change in the constitution of the Empire so confidently foreshadowed in the public press should for ever exclude India's claim to Dominion status" *Indian opinion which was still smarting under*

1 Report of the Administration of Lord Chelmsford Vol I p 58

2 Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council 1917-18 Vol LVI, pp 17-18

3 Department of Home, (Fol A) Dec 1916 Proceedings No 358 (Confidential)

4 Report of the Administration of Lord Chelmsford p 61

the feeling of ill-treatment of Indians in some parts of the empire viewed this fear with great uneasiness. The long postponement of announcement as to the future position of India, therefore, perplexed all shades of public opinion in India.<sup>1</sup> The moderates and the extremists who had parted company since 1907 again closed their ranks to make a united demand for self-government. The Congress and the Muslim League joined hands to push forward this demand. In the Congress session held at Lucknow in 1916 passionate speeches were delivered and India's claim for a form of responsible government was hotly urged.<sup>2</sup> Everything else was not merely given a secondary place but sank into insignificance and did not arrest the attention of the audience. A. C. Majumdar in his presidential address urged that the remedy of all Indian grievances lay in "the grant of self-government call it Home Rule, call it self-rule, call it swaraj, call it self-government, it is all one and the same thing."<sup>3</sup> In a resolution unanimously passed the Congress expressed the opinion that the time has come when His Majesty the King Emperor should be pleased to issue a proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date." The resolution further demanded that a definite step should be taken towards self-government by granting reform contained in the scheme prepared by the All India Congress Committee in concert with the Reform Committee appointed by the All India Muslim League. It further said that "in the reconstruction of Empire India shall be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire and the self-governing Dominions."<sup>4</sup> Interesting speeches were delivered in support of the resolutions and the speakers included representatives of different shades of opinion such as S. N. Banerjee, B. C. Pal, Mrs. Besant, Tilak, Mazaharul Haq, Jhangir.<sup>5</sup> The Congress also resolved to carry on active, educative and propagandist work during the year 1917 by means of its Committees and Home Rule Leagues both in India and in England.<sup>6</sup>

1. "INDIA, In the years 1917-1918," Report presented to the Parliament by the Government of India, p. 29.

2. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1916, pp. 7-8.

3. Report of the Indian National Congress 1916, p. 20.

4. Ibid, Resolution on Self-government.

5. Ibid, pp. 80-85.

6. Report of the Indian National Congress 1916. Resolution XIII.



## The Congress League Scheme of Reform

The year 1916 is memorable in history of the Congress for its high achievements<sup>1</sup>. Over-riding the spirit of division which had penetrated in its ranks it demonstrated its strength and claim of representing Indian nationalism. Both the moderates and extremists sank their differences and came on a common platform for a united demand of self government. On the whole the most important event in the historic Congress of 1916 was the Hindu Muslim compact which convulsed not only the Indian patriots but their critics also. Its importance lay in the fact that both Hindus and Muslims whose differences were so prominently emphasised as a bar to India's claim for self government could unite to make a common political demand on the British Government. It is noteworthy that during the year 1915 the Muslim League which had until shortly before that time stood mainly for the protection of Muslim interest against the anticipated Hindu ascendancy had gradually become dominated by those members of young Muslim Party who upheld the new ideal of self government for India. Under their influence it agreed to accept the scheme of reform. This compact was ratified by the Congress and the Muslim League both of which held their annual sessions at Lucknow in December 1916<sup>2</sup>. The scheme as a whole became known as the 'Congress League Scheme' of reform and the agreement it embodied is generally called the Lucknow Pact. The fundamental idea of the Congress League scheme was that the voice of the duly elected representatives of the people should prevail both in Indian and in the Provincial Legislative Councils so as to secure to these legislatures complete freedom of legislation, full control of finances of the country and the power of controlling the executive. It aimed at Provincial Autonomy accompanied by the liberalisation of the Government of India<sup>3</sup>. The outcome of these events was that the Congress and the League as political organisations were committed to demand of responsible self government or Home Rule for India within the British empire. The Congress League Scheme of reform was pressed upon the attention of the Government as the minimum concession which Indian political opinion

1 Report of the General Secretaries of the Indian National Congress for 1917 1918 p. 1

2 Ibid p. 1

3 Report of the Indian National Congress 1916 pp. 70-80

was prepared to accept.<sup>1</sup> The close of the year of 1916, therefore, marked the emergence of a distinct and new phase of Indian political problem, the watch-word of which was the establishment of responsible self-government. The history of the Indian Nationalist Movement in the succeeding years was chiefly concerned with it.

### **The British Committee and the agitation for Responsible Government**

As in India, so in England the years 1915-1916 were those of anxious preparation.<sup>2</sup> The British Committee proposed to make suitable arrangement for the due hearing of the Congress-League Scheme of reforms in England, the seat of power. In order to give publicity to the reform scheme the committee, therefore, prepared a note seeking British support for Indian demand on the following grounds. Firstly, the Congress supported the British nation in her war effort, and it expected the fulfilment of the British promise to apply the principle of 'self-determination' when the war was over. Secondly the Congress organization was dominated by the moderate leaders, who still believed in the British justice and fair play and also in the constitutional ways of agitation. Thirdly the attitude of the British during the war period confirmed the optimism of Congress leaders in granting reasonable political concessions which would satisfy the Indian aspirations. Fourthly, since the outbreak of war, the object of the Congress was to attain by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire, and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members.<sup>3</sup>

From the earliest days of Chamberlain's appointment as the Secretary of State for India the British Committee in cooperation with Parliamentary friends persistently urged the India Office to announce definitely that self-government within the Empire was the goal of the British policy in India and at once to concede commissions in the army. At the same time in order that the British public should understand the broad facts upon which India's claim to self-govern-

1. Report of the General Secretaries of the Indian National Congress for 1917, p. 1.

2. Report of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress for 1915-1916.

3. Vide INDIA, Vol. XLVII (i) January 22, 1915 No. 934 (old) and 890 (new) series. Article I of the Indian National Congress' Constitution,

ment was based. The committee prepared and distributed widely two pamphlets entitled "The aims of Indian National Congress" and "An Indian Catechism for British Electors". In 1917 the Committee intensified its agitation. It carried on its general propaganda by meetings, lectures, the circulation of literature.<sup>1</sup> A memorandum prepared by William Wedderburn and his parliamentary friends was submitted to the Home Government on behalf of the British Committee. It set forth India's claim for self government within the Empire. After arguing the case for India the memorandum also urged the appointment of a small committee, selected from both houses of Parliament to consider the various reform schemes put forward, and report their recommendations to the Government.<sup>2</sup> The subsequent developments show that the British Government acted on the lines suggested by the British Committee when the Government of India Bill 1919 was prepared. In holding public meeting the British Committee also associated itself with other Indian political organisations. It further cooperated with them in joint conferences in which questions of policy and joint public action was considered.<sup>3</sup>

### **Establishment of the Home Rule for India League in London**

The work of the British Committee was further supplemented by the sustained educative and propagandist activities of the Home Rule leaders in England. They also organised Home Rule League in England and sent deputation and carried on an elaborate propaganda. To Mrs. Besant the work of British Committee was, no doubt, important, yet she called the British Committee 'a watching brief,' and thus a more effective body was imperative to propagate the Indian cause. Accordingly she organised an Auxiliary Home Rule League in London, which came into existence on June 7, 1916 at 18 Tavistock Square, London. Although there was no organizational association between the British Congress Committee and the Home Rule for India League yet their leaders cooperated.<sup>4</sup>

The Home Rule League sought to educate the British opinion on the need of self government for India by means of writings, speeches

1 Report of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress 1916-1917

2 Vide Minutes of the British Committee meeting May 13 1917

3 Report of the British Committee 1918

4 Vide letter of Lord Fenner Brockway to the author, dated Dec. 14 1966, Also minutes of the British Congress Committee, meeting June 20 1916

and contact. The League started with the publication and circulation of pamphlets dealing with burning Indian questions from the Home Rule point of view. It published 10,000 copies of a leaflet entitled, "What India Wants." It issued a large number of neatly printed books, pamphlets and leaflets setting for the various aspects of the Indian case in simple, clear and interesting language. Again and again, it sent out thousand circulars to influential bodies like trade unions and to important persons calling attention to grave Indian grievances or combating mischievous anti-Indian propaganda. It posted copies of larger publications in book-form e.g. Lajpat Rai's "Young India", Keir Hardie's "India" to the members of Parliament, and to all important political personalities in England. Public opinion was also influenced by means of speeches. A series of lectures were arranged. Joseph Baptista and E. Dyer delivered numerous lectures on Indian condition and aspirations in England, Scotland and Wales.<sup>1</sup> Among others who spoke on the need of Home Rule were Major D. Graham Pole, Dughlas Denman M. P. and Saint Nihal Singh and Miss Brown, Mrs Despard and J. M. Parikh.<sup>2</sup>

### **Tilak and His Home Rule Party in England**

The Home Rule for India propaganda in England was greatly stimulated by the arrival of Tilak in London in 1918 in connection with libral suit he had filed against Valentine Chirol. Some of the Home Rule workers, who returned from England, very strongly and persistently advised G. S. Khaparde that he alongwith Tilak should visit England in order to strengthen the Home Rule movement. Though Baptista had worked considerably well for the Home Rule cause, yet more persons were required to intensify the agitation.<sup>3</sup> Tilak and his close associates messers R. P. Karandikar, Vasudeo Joshi and G. M. Namjoshi reached England at the end of October 1918. While Tilak was busy in preparing his case he never forgot for a moment that much work was to be done in England on behalf of India. The field for his activities had already been prepared by Baptista. It helped Tilak greatly to start his work at once. He established a branch of Home Rule

1, Deptt. of Home, (Political-B), Prorceedings May 1918, No. 158 (secret) Baptista's speech at Leigh on Dec. 3, 1917. Transcript by F. K. Press Chief reporter Leigh Chronicle Leigh.

2. "INDIA," May 3, 1918, p. 145.

3. Khaparde Collection, His Diary 29th June, 1918.

League in Adelphi Terrace, adjoining the premises of Mrs Besant's League

Tilak did a lot of work in London during his visit by means of personal interviews with influential members of the Parliament, the Secretary of State for India and other prominent persons. He propagated the Indian cause through memorials leaflets, pamphlets and lectures. He was convinced that the historical moment was proper to make a direct appeal to the freedom-loving British people and to strike a blow for SWARAJ in the capital of the British Empire. Britain was preparing for General Elections. Labour Party was expected to emerge as a powerful force in British politics. It had also accepted the principle of self determination. Tilak therefore made efforts to obtain the support of the Labour Party for Indian cause. He started his London agitation campaign by contributing £2000 to the Labour Party's election campaign fund.<sup>1</sup> He issued four leaflets for distribution among electors each consisting of a page printed on one side and putting India's case in a nutshell. These leaflets were published under the following titles —

(1) "Remember India" (2) "Self Determination for Whom?" (3) "But what About India?" (4) "Home Rule for India League". These pamphlets raised interesting questions such as 'Will Britain deny to faithful friends what they accord to implacable enemies? Will Britons convert loyal India into literally a hundred Irelands in the East? Will Britons keep India alone in bondage in a freed world for the sake of Bureaucracies and capitalists? Can the world be tried for democracy without freeing India i.e. one fifth of mankind. No, never! Give India Home Rule, Her sons demand and deserve it. Question candidates, and urge them to support Home Rule for India.'<sup>2</sup>

A notable work of Tilak in England was the reorganisation of the British Committee which according to an official report 'had almost become a dead body by 1918 and its influence on British politics was negligible'.<sup>3</sup> The British Committee of the Congress had contended itself with issuing a small number of handbills bearing a question to be put to the Parliamentary candidates to ascertain their opinion regarding the Montagu Chelmsford Reports. It had also arranged a dozen of lectures at important places in Eng

1 Khaparde Collection B. G. Tilak to Dada Sahab Nov. 28 1918

2 *Vide Modern Review* Vol XXV No. 4 Oct. 1919 pp. 3-371

3 Home Department (P. L. Cal. Deposit) Nov. 1918 Proceedings Nos. 207-204

land, and also gave a lunch to Montagu for his support.<sup>1</sup> But all this was not to the entire satisfaction of Tilak.

Tilak gave his impressions of the British Committee and its organ 'India' in a letter addressed to Lala Lajpat Rai: "We have reported to All India Congress Committee the inefficiency of the British Congress Committee here...We might say that the paper 'India' is at present doing harm to our cause. The sooner it mends the better... The British Committee would not do anything."<sup>2</sup> As a result of his efforts the British Committee was reorganised. Its personnel was changed and new rules were framed. A sub-Committee to arrange a series of public meetings in the principal industrial districts of England was formed. A literature sub-Committee with Kelkar as its Convener was also formed for the purpose of drafting leaflets and pamphlets on current Indian questions. A series of lectures on Home Rule were arranged. Thus the Committee was made an effective organisation to serve the Congress agitation well.

### **The Announcement of August 20, 1917**

The Home Rule movement led by Besant and her supporters shook the bureaucracy, and made the English rulers think that a far greater majority of thinking-men desire free institutions, and they should recognise that the free institutions must come by reasonable stages. There was no answer to be given by the Britishers to the Home Rule call as their Government had not declared policy to put against Home Rule. This view was put forth by Sir James Meston in his meeting with Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for India. He said, "Let us accept the demand for progress on its best side as a claim to participation in one of the great ethical movements in history. Let us, therefore, be ready for our reply to it entirely without reference to India's part in the war, or without waiting for war..."<sup>3</sup>

On June 21, 1917 the Viceroy sent a telegram to the Secretary of State for India pressing him for an authoritative announcement of the British goal, as the position in India was reaching a serious stage, and many of the trusted and 'more experienced officers', were showing anxiety over the situation. He remarked, "Mrs. Besant

1. Khaparde Collection; Weekly report of Home Rule Deputation in England, August 28, 1919.

2. Khaparde Collection; Tilak to G. V. Gokhale-Jan. 23, 1919.

3. Chamberlain Papers (Indian affairs) Microfilm Reel. Note of Sir James Meston submitted to Chamberlain May 21, 1917.

and Tilak and others are fomenting with great vigour the agitation for immediate home rule and in the absence of any definite announcement by the Government of India as to their policy in the matter it is attracting many of those who hitherto have held less advanced views"<sup>1</sup> The Viceroy told him, "I shall keep things as quiet as possible but I do feel that the time has come when we all want a little help from the British Government"<sup>2</sup> The Secretary of State Chamberlain agreed with the Viceroy's proposal. He had begun to realise its necessity. "I do not dispute your goal" he wrote to the Viceroy, "though I dislike the elaboration and the formality of your definition"<sup>3</sup>

Mr Montagu who had ever since his day as under-Secretary of State for India, been known for his sympathy with Indian political aspirations was also feeling in the same direction. During a debate in the House in June 1917 he pleaded for a more responsible and democratic administration and remarked "But whatever the object of your rule in India, the universal demand of those Indians whom I have met, and corresponded with is that you should state it. Having stated it, you should give some instalment to show that you are in real earnest, some beginning of new plan which you intend to pursue, that gives you the opportunity of giving greater representative institutions in some form or the other to the people of India"<sup>4</sup> A few days later he wrote to Chamberlain expressing similar views, and demanded an immediate pronouncement of His Majesty's Government in context with the cry of the Indian leaders for their demand. But Chamberlain resigned on July 14, 1917 over the Mesopotamian affairs and the cabinet could not, therefore, take any decision on the issue. On July 18, 1917 Montagu succeeded Chamberlain as Secretary of State for India. He took up the threads energetically where Chamberlain had left them. The problem, however, was what should be the nature of the announcement. British Government was not prepared to grant self government to India, as demanded by Home Rulers and other Indian leaders. Montagu consulted a few British Statesmen like Curzon, who were outrightly indifferent and reluctant apparently to use the word 'self-government' in the proposed announcement. On the other hand,

1 Home Department, (Political A) July 1917, Proceedings No. 294 95

2 Chamberlain Papers June 21, 1917

3 Ibid Chamberlain to Chelmsford May 15 1917

4 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) July 20, 1917, 2203-2210

exclusion of the 'word' would not fulfil any purpose to satisfy the Indian Leaders.

After great care the policy was drafted and approved by the cabinet in spite of their being busy with other matters. It was announced in the House of Commons on August 20, 1917 by Montagu in reply to a question of Charles Roberts. He said: "The policy of His Majesty's Government with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."<sup>1</sup> The declaration, constituted a landmark in the constitutional progress of India as it was the first authoritative declaration of British Policy to lead India to responsible self-government so insistently claimed by India. As such it envisaged constitutional changes of fundamental character.

### **The Montagu-Chelmsford Report**

The announcement was followed by British Government's decision to send Montagu to India immediately for purposes of consultation and inquiry and to afford the opportunity for the public discussion of the proposed reform.<sup>2</sup> Montagu came to India in November 1917 and after having ascertained official as well as public opinion in India, he drafted a scheme of constitutional reforms in consultation with Chelmsford and the committee appointed for the purpose consisting of William Duke, Earl of Doungliman, B. N. Basu and Charles Roberts. This scheme was published on July 8, 1918 and was known as Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian constitutional reforms. It was on the basis of this scheme that the Government of India Bill was drafted which having received the King's assent became an Act in December 1919. The scheme proposed four major formulas of reforms. The first of these advocated as far as possible complete popular control on local bodies and the largest possible independence for them. The second designated the provinces as the domain in which the 'earlier steps' towards the progressive realisation of responsible government were to be taken. Here there was to be some mea-

1. Parliamentary Debates, (House of Commons) 20th August, 1917, 1994-95.

2. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) 20th August, 1917, 1694.



sure of responsibility granted at once with the aim of granting complete responsibility, when conditions would permit. Third formula kept the central government of India 'wholly responsible to Parliament' though Legislative Council would be enlarged and non officials would be given more opportunities to influence the administration. Finally with the time, the Home Government's control over India must be relaxed<sup>1</sup>

### **The British Committee and the Montagu Chelmsford Report**

The Montagu Chelmsford Report did not satisfy many congress leaders. Political difference in India had begun since the announcement of August 20, 1917. The moderates had accepted the announcement as Magna Charter of India. The extremists showed dissatisfaction as it fell short of their aspirations. The breach between the Moderates and the Extremists was complete on the publication of the Montagu Chelmsford Report. The Moderates accepted the scheme as an earnest effort to meet the legitimate aspirations of Indians. The Extremists thought otherwise and criticised the scheme unsatisfactory and unacceptable. The Congress in its special session at Bombay in August 1918 declared the Montagu Chelmsford Report as "inadequate and unsatisfactory". The Congress had by this time came under the influence of the Extremists. It however, did not reject the scheme but declared that nothing less than self government within the Empire would satisfy the legitimate aspirations of Indians<sup>2</sup>. The British Committee which was hitherto under the influence of the Moderates supported the scheme<sup>3</sup>. The Congress viewed the attitude of the British Committee as not in accordance with the policy of the Congress and urged the Committee to act according to its resolution. A sub committee was therefore appointed to consider the 'report' and prepared a memorandum on the subject. The committee held frequent deliberations to determine its attitude and the policy of INDIA with regard to the proposals. Finally, it was agreed that the Committee and the Editor of the Journal should take the line indicated by the Congress resolutions<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the British Committee was called upon to act in accordance

1 Keith, A. B. *A Constitutional History of India* (1600-1935) pp. 156-59

2 *Report of the General Secretaries of the Congress*, 1918

3 *Minutes of the British Committee Meeting July 1918*, p. 238

4 *Ibid*, September 17, 1913 p. 242

with the instructions received from the Congress organisation in India.

The Government of India Bill was placed for its record reading on June 5, 1919. The debate on the Government of India Bill in the Parliament led the Congress leaders to intensify their agitation in England. The British Committee undertook to act more vigorously than before in pushing forward Indian demand, and in educating British public and the Parliament. Tilak and his other colleagues played an active part in the propagandist activities of the Committee. They started the campaign as soon as the Government of India Bill was brought to the Parliament. He consolidated his resources for the agitation, and succeeded in influencing members of Labour Party which supported the Indian claim for reforms. With the co-operation of the 'Party' he distributed his Home Rule literature throughout England. He and his colleagues delivered several addresses on the Indian constitutional reforms at different places under the auspices of National Liberal Club, Indian Association, Positivist Society, Fabian Society and several other associations. His speeches attracted several leading British politicians. During one of his speeches at 'British and Indian Society' on May 3, 1919 he was introduced by Col. Wedgewood as 'the most popular leader in India, one who in these days of democracy is fighting for the liberty' of his country. One of the important speeches of Tilak in London was at Essex Hall under the auspices of Fabian Society. It was presided by George Bernard Shaw, who was very much sympathetic in his remarks. This meeting was also stated to be considerably good for the Indian cause.<sup>1</sup>

### **Indian Deputations in England**

Coincided with the activities of the Home Rule League and the British Congress Committee, reached the Congress deputation in London including B. C. Pal, G. S. Khaparde, N. C. Kelkar, V. P. Madhao Rao and V. J. Patel. The same summer moderates reached England headed by Surendranath Banerjee. This delegation included among others such persons as S. N. Sastri, C. Y. Chintamani, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and H. N. Kunzru.

The British Committee was divided in opinion due to the divergent views and split between the 'moderates' and the extremists. Nevertheless, it decided to promote the cause of Indian Reform to the best of its ability. It, therefore, assured the visiting delegates to

1. Khaparde Collection; Weekly Report of Home Rule Deputation, May 5 1919.

extend full assistance and cooperation in obtaining interviews with M P's and other public men. But it felt that the Committee, and the 'deputation' should prepare their own memorandum, and Amendments on the Bill which was then before the Parliament for debate, and later confer together <sup>1</sup>

After the second reading of the Bill in both the Houses of Parliament, the bill was referred to the Joint Select Committee of Parliament consisting of 14 members drawn from both the Houses with Lord Selborne as its chairman. At the time of the work of the Committee, there were seven deputations in London representing the Indian National Congress, the Moderate Party, the three Home Rule Leagues (All India Home Rule League of G. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer and Horniman, the National Home Rule League under Mrs. Annie Besant, B. P. Wadia, P. K. Telang and Jamnadas Dwarkadas, and Indian Home Rule League of Tilak, Khaparde and Kelkar) the All India Muslim League with M. A. Jinnah, Yunus Hasan and G. M. Bhargu and the last of non-Brahmin Deputation consisting of Dr. T. M. Nair, Venkatta Reddi and Ramaya Lungar Nair <sup>2</sup>

To the British, it was, therefore, a confusion to know and hear one thing from the different deputations representing different characters. While introducing the Bill in the House of Lords, Lord Curzon rightly said "There is a deputation from the Indian National Congress which thinks that the Bill does not go far enough. There is a deputation from the European Association which thinks that it goes much too far. There is a Moderate Association which generally speaking, supports the Government's proposals. There are representatives of the Muslim League and other bodies who wish to be heard from their particular stand point" <sup>3</sup>

The Parliament was adjourned in the second week of August 1919, and was to meet again on 22nd of October. The Joint Select Committee also stood adjourned concurrently. This gave an opportunity to the various deputations for their constitutional propaganda, and agitation through the means of lectures, interviews and a greater publicity. There were occasions, when the delegates belonging to the various political creeds, assembled and spent some time together in a cordial manner. On July, 29 'Britain and India

1 Minutes of the British Committee. Special meeting. June 2, 1919

2 Khaparde Collection. Weekly Report of the Home Rule Deputation. July 7, 1919

3 Parliamentary Debates (House of Lords) June 30, 1919, 1133

Society' gave an at home party at the Caxton Hall, where all the members of the different deputations were invited to give short addresses. Srinivasa Sastri, N. G. Kelkar, R. Aiyer, V. J. Patel, G. S. Khaparde, M. A. Jinnah and Mrs. Besant attended it, and urged the necessity of expanding the Bill.<sup>1</sup> At another party, given by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu in the Ellysee Restaurant, several members of different deputations had friendly common talks. On the following day the Indian Press Association arranged a lunch at the Galle Restaurant, where besides Indian gentlemen, there were a few representatives of the British Press including Horniman, Bobson Kenworthy (M. P.) Lansbury, R. S. Aiyenger, Satyamurthi, B. G. Tilak, and Wadia. The Englishmen who spoke on the occasion, were sympathetic to Indian demands.<sup>2</sup>

At its annual Conference in 1919, the Congress recorded its appreciation of the assistance given by the British Congress Committee and especially of Dr. Clark, Dr. Rutherford, Holford Knight, and J. M. Parikh in its work there. It also expressed its entire satisfaction on the reorganisation of the Committee as a executive body of the Congress pledged to carry on the Congress propaganda in England.<sup>3</sup> Thus the British Committee, as an executive body of the Indian National Congress, took up the job of propaganda afresh in England for the Congress. It sustained its work through public speeches and publication of the Congress views on Indian questions. It published several leaflets on Roullat Bills and the Punjab atrocities expressing great concern on the British policy towards Indians. The copies were distributed among the public and the British Government officials.<sup>4</sup> The Committee also touched the question of South Africa, and the critical position of Indian settlers there, who were not being treated as equal to the Europeans.<sup>5</sup> But these activities did not lead to any tangible result.

The most important outcome of Congress agitation in England after the world war first was the official announcement of British policy on August 20, 1917. It was the "most momentous utterance ever made in India's chequered history"<sup>6</sup> observed the authors of

1. Khaparde Collection, July 31, 1919. "How we are getting On" (Weekly Report of the Home Rule Deputation)

2. Ibid, September 4, 1919.

3. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1919, Resolutions XXIV & XXV.

4. Minutes of the British Committee, Feb. 13, 1920.

5. Ibid, May 18, 1920.

6. Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, p. 5.

**Montague-Chelmsford Report** Its importance lay in the fact that it recognised India's claim to responsible self-government so insistently demanded by the Congress. For the first time after the assumption of the Government of India by the Crown in 1858 the goal of the British rule in India was formally defined in 1917. Till then the Parliament had been content with the desire of securing a good and efficient government in India but in 1917 its attitude changed. It pledged itself to policy of introducing parliamentary Government in India on the British model.

**A**FTER having analysed the activities of the Indian National Congress in England it is necessary to examine the British response to them. The Congress had extended its work to England under the belief that Englishmen with their democratic instincts and traditions would surely respond to its appeals. Inspired by this conviction its leaders worked hard for more than two decades to acquaint the British people with the growing political aspirations of Indians and to impress upon them the need of accepting Indian demands for the better and also permanent relations between India and England. But the British response to the Congress agitation was inconsistent and halting. It was marked by an attitude either of indifference and coldness or hostility; and on the whole it was not encouraging. The Conservatives were hardly sympathetic. They were even hostile to the aspirations of Congressmen. The liberals had shown some sympathy but their attitude was extremely cautious and modest and lacked correct appreciation of the situations. Few radicals and labourites expressed sympathy with a pro-Indian policy. But they too did not make Indian problem an issue of their official programme. On the whole British policy towards Indian problem lacked consistency and clarity. This led to important consequences.

### **Early Response**

The early British response to the Congress movement as an agency for bringing the British into contact with the Indian political aspirations was of mixed character. In certain quarters the Congress movement was viewed with sympathy while in others it was suspected. In the beginning Congress did not attract much attention in the political circles of England. It was, however, after the organisation of the British Committee in 1889 that the Congress aroused noticeable interest of the British people. The Press was more vocal. But the opinion of the Press was divided. There was

a sympathetic response from certain quarters. In 1889 the "Daily Chronical"—a leading British paper noticed with approval the emergence of the Congress movement in England. In its issue of December 28, 1889 the paper wrote "The great curse of an administration, however, is that our best and most enterprising administrators have no effective public opinion to fall back upon for sympathy or support whilst they are in office. The Indian National Congress will not only create that opinion but it will give it more or less authoritative expression"<sup>1</sup> The movement embodied in the activities of the Congress in England was favourably noticed by another British paper "Bolton Evening News". In its issue of January 22, 1890 it wrote "The work of the Congress is steadily making itself felt and it may safely be said that its influence will be to create more interest in this country on behalf of the Indian affairs than anything else that could be named". Commenting on the demands of the Congress, "Darwen News" observed on January 23, 1890 that "in their demands now patently and respectfully urged for years there is simply nothing, but what is just and fair, only one wonder is that they do not ask more". The publication of "INDIA" as the official organ of the British Committee, was applauded in a certain section of the British press as "a bright and exceedingly interesting news sheet full of promise". It was spoken as a paper containing "cleverly written notes, thoughtful articles and portraits of Native and European leaders of the reform movement". A leading British paper stated the objects of paper in the following words "A news paper has been started for the discussion of Indian affairs. It undertakes to explain at home those grievances and wants of India which have given rise to the National Congress Movement"<sup>2</sup>

A few English Papers and the Editors assisted the British Committee in propagating the Congress cause. INDIA very often gave space to publish their letters and statements. For instance, Mr. Souley Johnstone—the Editor of the Southwells 'Daily News' expressed his views on 29th of April 1890 in the Colonial Hall Cardiff and told of the wrongs done to the Indian people for which 'Blue Books' and Consular Reports' to be responsible as not to give the facts and tell the truth. He called the Indian people well off instead of 'Salty and barbarious'. He pitied the ignorance of the English people about India and her natives. He held "It was the trouble

1. Vide INDIA, Vol. I No. 1 Feb, 1890, p. 8

2. INDIA, Vol. I No. 1, Feb 1890

of the Englishman that he could be happy or prosperous unless it was under an English Government and controlled by English laws.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1890 Sir Charles Dilkie supported the claims of the Congress and justified the existence of the organisation. He declared: “there is so much reason to think that the Congress movement really represents the cultivated intelligence of the country, that those, who ridicule it, do harm to the imperial interests of Britain bitterly wounding and alienating men who are justified in what they do, and who do it in reasonable and cautious form, and who ought to be conciled by being met half way.”<sup>2</sup>

A number of Englishmen, expressed their sympathy with the Indian agitation carried on by the British Committee in England. They conveyed their feelings through their letters and encouraged the organizers of the public meetings in England, because, as was observed in one of the letters, “Our responsibilities are so vast and solemn and weighty, that it is encouraging to see any sign of awakening to the sense of our obligations, and of earnest endeavour to discharge them.”<sup>3</sup> Similar letters were pouring into the office of the British Committee.

John Page Hopps—the Editor of the “Coming Day” was well known for his appreciation of the Congress. He decried hostile attitude of the British towards India and held that ‘it is not certain, after all, that the people of India are, on the whole, unfit. The National Congress might very well serve as a preliminary to a Parliament.....For the rest, India is atleast the fit for Home Rule as Russia is fit for the Duma, and it may safely be said that if the argument of ‘not fit’ had been too strictly applied in England the modern House of Commons would never have been born’. The sympathetic Editor argued that India must be its own saviour, and thus advocated Home Rule for India.<sup>4</sup>

A powerful section of the British Press, however, was opposed to the movement set on foot by the British Committee of the Congress. The conservative paper ‘The Times’ was more vocal in denouncing the activities of the British Committee; and the Congress in particular. Commenting on the Resolutions adopted in the first session of the Congress, it observed that if they were

1. INDIA, Vol. I No. 7, May 23, 1890, p. 143.

2. Problems of Great Britain Vol. II (London 1890) pp. 146-47; also R. S. Watson “Indian National Congress” vide Contemporary Review, July 1888, p. 104

3. Letter of Rev. Jn O. T. Brown: INDIA Vol. I No. 4, April 25, 1890 p. 12; also a letter of M. P. Mansfield in the Journal.

4. Indian Review, Vol. VIII No. 6 June 1907, p. 449.



carried out, very little would remain to England except the liability for the entire Indian debt. 'The Times' reminded the Congress that 'India was won by force, and must be governed by force, and if the British were to withdraw, it would be in favour not of the most fluent tongue or of the most ready pen, but the strongest arm and the sharpest sword'.<sup>1</sup> 'Morning Post' - another critic of the Congress attacked nature and organisation of the movement and denounced it as communal and sectarian body. It alleged that the organization was predominated by Hindus, and deplored the popular wishes of the Indians. In its issue of December 28, 1889 it stated "Whatever may be conceded to native wishes in the distant future, if it is the unanimous opinion of the most competent authorities upon Indian affairs that the time has not come yet, and that to encourage attempts at Hindu predominance at the present time would be not only intensely distasteful to the other people of India, but also be fought with peril to the very existence of our Indian Empire". 'The Star' of December 28, 1889 remarked "The Congress has got beyond the point, it can be pool-poohed".<sup>2</sup> 'Glasgow Herald' dated December 30, 1889 refused to recognise the Congress organisation as a political force in India. "The Indian Congress as a political force is a mockery and has been to many English politicians a delusion and a snare". 'Cheltenham Chronicle' charged it with upsetting the British system in India by the discontented persons. In its issue of January 4, 1890 it remarked 'A section of native (Indians) aided by a number of discontented and malcontent Europeans are simply seeking to upset the existing order of things in order to realise their own ambitions and sordid ends'.<sup>3</sup> Thus in general, the British press and their opinion regarded the congress as the 'great enemy' of British rule in India, and its demands as almost 'outrageous'. The English papers were interested more in giving publicity to their own affairs and interests. They cared very little for Indians and their problems. Sir William Wedderburn - the Chairman of the British Committee brought this fact to light when he wrote to one of his close colleagues in 1911. The English papers are so full of House of Lords,

1 Appendix to the proceedings of the first series of the Congress pp 80-87

2 INDIA, Vol. I No 1, February, 1890 p 8

3 Ibid

Coronation and Budget, Insurance etc. that they can give little attention to India.<sup>1</sup>

### **The British Parliament. Its response to Indian agitation**

The Parliament did not respond favourably to the appeals of the Congress leaders. Its members were not interested seriously in Indian affairs. During the period of 1888-90 Charles Bradlaugh strongly advocated the Indian cause in the Parliament by asking questions on almost all important matters relating to India. And thus the early interest of the Parliament was confined to questions only. But gradually the scope of interest became widened with passage of time. Charles Bradlaugh introduced two Bills which provided for the enlargement of the councils, and the extension of their functions. His death in January 1891, however, prevented him from championing the Indian cause: and his Bill was replaced by one of Lord Cross' in the Conservative regime. The Indian Council's Amendment Bill was ready for Parliament in 1889, but it was not introduced in that year 'owing to the extreme pressure of business in the House of Commons'. On February 21, 1890 the Bill was introduced in the House of Lords, when Lord Herschell inquired about the papers received from India. Lord Cross-- the Secretary of State for India remarked that the Bill related to a 'very unimportant matter.' He showed his complete ignorance of any communication which could be laid before Parliament. He also added that the papers ought not to be laid on the table for some time.<sup>2</sup> However the Bill was passed through all successive stages by 18th March 1890, and was sent to the House of Commons, but it did not succeed in getting beyond the first reading. On January 26th, 1891, when James Bryce asked whether the Government proposed to take the second reading, W. H. Smith - the first Lord of Treasury declined to give any undertaking.<sup>3</sup> Finally the Bill was withdrawn in June 1891. It was reintroduced in February 1892 as an official Bill in the House of Lords, and was passed without any alteration. G. N. Curzon introduced it into the House of Commons, and this time the Bill was passed by both the Houses and received Royal Assent on June 20, 1892.

1. Wedderburn to Gokhale May 13, 1911. Gokhale Papers F. N. 579 Pt. IV.

2. Parliamentary Debates (House of Lords) February 21, 1890, 849.

3. Ibid.

Thus the British Parliament was apathetic and indifferent towards the Indian problems. On August 14, 1890 the Indian Budget was brought before the Parliament for discussion. Of 670 members only 70 were present at the time, and even those were not in a fit mood to discuss the subject. A few questions were put as a matter of form by some of the members, and then the House was dissolved after passing the budget without any change. This attitude of indifference was noticed by Indian Press. A leading newspaper commented: 'Thus the destinies of the 25 crores of Indians were settled in ten minutes. It is in this perfidious manner that the budget is discussed year after year in Parliament. The English, though they are a civilised and intelligent people do not seem to sufficiently realise the fact that their interests are indissolubly bound up with those of people of India.'<sup>1</sup>

Whenever the Indian Party in Parliament raised question or proposed amendments or made speeches on economic problems, the Parliament did not respond to the expectations of the Indian leaders. In 1898 a number of Indian supporters touched the economic questions like cotton excise, custom duties in the interest of the Indian people, and expressed a great concern over the existing conditions, and demanded for the favourable attitude towards India. The Parliament either had no time or no mood to give any sympathetic and favourable response. Fowler the then Secretary of State for India informed the Indian Viceroy Lord Elgin on February 15, 1899: 'Dadabhai Naoroji proposed an amendment. The House was in sympathy with my reply, he had to withdraw for a declaration of the policy of the Indian Government. I thought it, however unnecessary to do more than answer the points of his question.'<sup>2</sup> 'In 1896 the British Committee of the Congress submitted a memorandum to the Parliament on the subject of the 'Separation of Judicial and Executive Functions' exercised by the same officer in several provinces of British India. This was, no doubt, a reasonable demand, and as on account of concentration of power in the hands of one officer, the impartial administration of justice was very often prevented and seriously interfered with. But the memorial did not find favour with the Parliament. Hamilton, on behalf of the House of Commons, declined to discuss the subject as it had not passed through Govern

<sup>1</sup> Confidential Report on Native Newspapers of Bengal BUDWAN SANJIVINI, October 7, 1890

<sup>2</sup> Fowler to Elgin Feb 5 1895 Fowler Papers (All the three Vols) Microfilm Reel MSS EU C 145 13E

ment of India, and informed the British Committee accordingly.<sup>1</sup>

An interesting example of the lack of interest of the House on Indian matters is quoted by W. C. Bonnerjee who once visited the House of Commons to hear the Indian Budget debate. Sir Roper Letheridge was addressing the House. Bonnerjee, to his great astonishment, found that the only audience was the speaker of the House. Sir William Wedderburn was so desperate on this attitude of the Parliament that his belief in the Parliament to obtain justice and favour for the Indian grievance withered away.<sup>2</sup> Lord Curzon confirmed this fact a little later in one of his letters addressed to the Secretary of State for India when he asserted ".....I know that the inclination of the Secretary of State is to think that the House of Commons will not find the time, the energy, or the interest to pass through any small piece of Indian legislation when I was under Secretary, Bills were actually dropped for that reason before they had got to a second reading."<sup>3</sup>

During the period of seven years (1893-1900) of the Indian Parliamentary Committee, debates on the Indian affairs did not attract the attention of the Parliament to any considerable extent. Except on a few occasions the opposition too was more or less indifferent to Indian questions. In February 1898 when the Seditious Laws, and the detention of the Natu brothers were debated in the Parliament prominent of the opposition refrained from the proceedings, and the discussion remained confined to a few members of the Parliamentary Committee. The opposition took no part. Lord George Hamilton remarked that Wedderburn was completely "blown up".<sup>4</sup>

The attitude of the British Parliament during the regime of the Liberal Party appeared a little modified. There seemed an inclination on the part of the Parliament and the Government headed by John Morley in particular to grant more concessions to Indians. But this kind of response did not embody a new policy towards India. On the question of grant of self-government both the parties were in agreement and there was very little inclination of the Parliament to criticise the intended enlargement of Legislative Councils and

1. Minutes of the British Committee: Meeting March 3, 1896, Vol. January 1, 1894-December 1, 1896.

2. Natesan, G. A.: India In the House of Commons, pp. 170-78: Sir William Wedderburn at a public meeting at St. Ermsur's Mansion London March, 1899.

3. Curzon to Hamilton Feb. 8, 1900: Hamilton Collection. Micro. Reel 8.

4. Hamilton to Elgin, February 25, 1898: Hamilton Collection.

of their functions under the Morley-Minto Reforms. Speaking on Indian affairs in the House of Lords, Curzon described such measures as only carrying out the traditional policy of the British in India which no one would wish to retard. He pressed the Parliament to implement its so called traditional policies in the Indian administration.<sup>1</sup> John Morley foresaw that "there would be grave discontent with some of his proposals, and sought to avoid it". He asserted that every politician or administrator of importance who had to deal with the method of government in India deprecated the importance of British institutions without discretion.<sup>2</sup> On this Lord Dufferin said "From this it might be concluded that we were contemplating an approach at all events so far as the Provinces are concerned, to English Parliamentary government, and English constitutional system". But Morley repudiated the intention of mingling 'East & West', and to set up a Parliamentary system in India.<sup>3</sup> After the outbreak of World War first, parliamentary interest in Indian aspirations under-went some change. There are indications of the sympathetic response. But still the attitude was marked with caution.

The British Prime Minister Asquith though supported the claims of the Indian people for the association of their own administration, yet he considered their claims to be admitted by successive stages.<sup>4</sup> This attitude of 'caution' was followed by the British Parliament indigneously till the Government of India Act 1919 was passed. The famous Montagu's declaration of August 20, 1917 repeated the sentiments of Asquith.

### **Demands for the Self-Determination & the Government of India Bill 1919**

When the War was still on, Sir H. E. A. Cotton - an ardent advocate of the Congress in England, demanded for constitutional changes, and asked the British Parliament to fulfil the British pledges. He drew the attention of the British Parliament to the Indian opinion, and the disappointment of the reforms given to them in the past. He reminded the House of the August declaration, and insisted to recognise the Indian claims for the

1. *Parliamentary Debates (House of Lords)* June 30, 1903, 499-513

2. *Cambridge History of India* Vol. VI, p. 567

3. *Parliamentary Debates (House of Lords)*, December 8, 1903, 91

4. *Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons)* April 1, 1909, p. 530

self-determination to be considered at the time of the war.<sup>1</sup> Cotton was supported by another member of the Parliament, who declared that "our decision must be in favour of self-Government. I do not think that there can be any two questions about it, with all its difficulties for us and with all its dangers even more for India than ourselves."<sup>2</sup> In 1919 Sir Donald Maclean — sympathetic to India also recalled the unfulfilled promises and undertaking under the Queen's Proclamation on November 1, 1858, and the progress under the Acts of Parliament, 1861, 1892 and 1909 in which certain steps were taken towards the fulfilment of some part of the promise. He, then urged that "Here once more be find perfectly regular and far too long delayed additional step in bringing the people of India the year long promises given by this country to that Dominion....."<sup>3</sup>

The war ended in the December 1918. And the second reading of the Government of India Bill 1919 was made in June 1919. The long and eagerly awaited reforms affecting Indian people were placed before the House by the Secretary of State for India.<sup>4</sup> Sir H. Craike did not lend the full support to the Reform's scheme, and foresaw a danger resulting from some of the proposals of the Bill and even doubted about its practicability in the context of the events occurring in India. He maintained: ".....that I think, I see the danger. I distrust, and very strongly distrust some of the recent experiments. I have doubts as to the practicability of some of the proposals."<sup>5</sup> Bennett, during the course of his speech, opposed any idea of transferring the responsibility to the Indians which would effect the efficiency of the Indian administration. He said: ".....it is hopeless and dangerous to put more power into the hands of the people of India. because the certain result of doing that would be to decrease the efficiency of the administration."<sup>6</sup> Chamberlain, much before the Government of India Bill was prepared for discussion in the Parliament, cautioned his colleagues and the framers of the Bill against the method of election as it was incorporated in Lord Morley's reforms. He criticised Morley and his policies, and observed that "the indirect method of elec-

1. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) August 6, 1918, 1183.

2. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) August 6, 1918, 1185: Speech of Captain C. Lyod.

3. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) June 5, 1919, 1321.

4. Ibid, 1301.

5. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) June 5, 1919 1321.

6. Ibid, 1337.

tion pursued by Lord Morley has worked badly, and has indeed produced exactly the results against which it was intended to guard" <sup>1</sup> In the House of Lords, Lord Curzon warned the House against adoption of any policy which would lead Britain to lose her 'love and attachment to India. He remarked "I should greatly regret any change which made them think that India is a country not worth labouring for a living in" <sup>2</sup>

There were several who sided with the Indian spirit and demands. Among those chiefly were Col. Yate and Col. Wedgwood. The former considered sympathetically the problems of self government in India to be founded on unity, and expressed his feelings in a sympathetic manner. He suggested, 'I know there could be no better thing for India than to have them all sitting together round the table in equal numbers, acting together and sending them decrease fourth as from one united Government what you can not divide. We have got a coalition Ministry in this country. Could we have the same in India?' <sup>3</sup> Col. Wedgwood felt surprised at the idea of having bureaucracy and democracy running side by side as enunciated in the proposed Bill. He warned the British Parliament that even if the Bill is passed the constitutional agitation in India would not end until it achieved 'a reasonable and satisfactory form of government' <sup>4</sup> But these sympathetic expressions to Indian cause aroused little interest of the Parliament. Some persons from among the British politicians and statesmen had always been found sympathising with the cause of Indian political progress. But India had always been in the Parliament an issue of non controversial nature. Members of all parties allied themselves on the basic issue of establishing Parliamentary government in India. They had, in fact, too much to do other questions of urgency to spare on the subject of India. Domestic, Irish and foreign affairs were making more and more insistent demands on the time and thoughts of the members of the Parliament. The question of imperial unity and safety was upper most in their mind. The Government of India Bill of 1919 was presented to the House of Commons on 29th May, was read a second time on 5th June, and was on that day sent to a Joint

1 Chamberlain to Sir Roper Lethbridge 22 June 1918 (Secret) Chamberlain Papers. Microfilm Reel 1

2 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) June 30, 1919

3 Ibid (House of Commons) June 5, 1919, 1313

4 Ibid 1403

Committee of both Houses on which the lower House was represented by seven members. The bill was recommended on 3rd December, 1919, considered by the commons on that day, and the next and was read a third time on the 5th. The President of the Board of Education was the only member of the cabinet besides the Secretary of State who made any contribution to the debates. The leaders of the Labour and Liberal parties made brief speeches.<sup>1</sup> There was, therefore, little inclination of the Parliament to examine the details of the Bill in relation to Indian aspirations.

### India Office

From the very beginning the India Office played a part of hostility to the Indian feelings and always stood against any reform. A Liberal minded Morley too was entirely captured by the English bureaucracy at India Office, and did not deal the wanted hands with sympathetic words even.<sup>2</sup> William Wedderburn described Morley a "weary man" whose sympathies were with the Congress, but found it difficult to bear up against the weight of this great bureaucracy which had had everything its own way for so long.<sup>3</sup> India Office, therefore, was always a hurdle for India's reforms and progress; and opposed to any aspiration of the Congress. It faced and did all it could 'to prevent the truth coming out.'<sup>4</sup> One of the leading papers of India complained of the Indian legislative being hurried through Parliament without consulting the Indian opinion and hostile attitude of the India Office. It remarked: ".....that the manner in which the legislative measures in connection with the Indian matters for which the approval of Parliament is necessary are pushed through by India Office is hardly fair to the people of India."<sup>5</sup> Sir William Wedderburn expressed his anxiety over this situation, and wanted a change with hope: "The centre of the mischief is the constitution of the India Office which is the House of Lords of the Indian situation, and my preposition is that while our friends are still in power, and determined effort would be made to capture the

1. India in Parliament; Vide The Cambridge History of India, Vol. VI, p. 223.

2. Alfred to Wacha Sept. 8, 1907; Gokhale Papers, F.N. 576 (Alfred letters)

3. Wedderburn to Gokhale May 2, 1908; Gokhale Papers.

4. Khaparde Collection: Khaparde's Diary 21-4-1910.

5. Confidential Report on the Native Newspapers of Bombay PRAJABANDHU (34) 24th Sept. 1911.



position or atleast neutralise its malign influence. Also I believe that the enterprise is, by no means, very difficult, if wisely conducted."<sup>1</sup>

The British policy and attitude towards the Indian aspirations was the reflection of Britain's imperialistic interests in India. Although the National upsurge influenced the British rulers and made them gradually feel that unless the association of Indians with their administration is not sought in a greater degree, they would not rule India comfortably,<sup>2</sup> yet the representative British officials were not prepared to grant what the Congress leaders demanded. Lord Dufferin, who initiated the idea of Congress, became hostile to it. Lord Curzon repeatedly ridiculed the Congress agitation.

### H. H. Fowler

The early leaders had great hopes from the Liberal Party, but H. H. Fowler the Secretary of State for India during 1894-95, belied their hopes in regard to the Indian nationalism and the demands of the Congress. He followed the lines of his predecessors who crushed the Indian national feelings through their utterances on Indian affairs. In Parliament he thought unnecessary to do anything more than answer the points of the members who supported the Indian cause.<sup>3</sup> The British Committee resented the attitude of Sir Fowler on the Indian question which was discrediting the Liberal Party in India.<sup>4</sup> However he made a gesture of sympathy for India and her people like a shrewd diplomat and impressed the Parliament "the interests of Indian political, personal commercial, financial and social—are committed to the individual and collective responsibility of the House of Commons."<sup>5</sup>

### George Hamilton

George F. Hamilton—Fowler's successor (1895-1903) also ridiculed the idea of introducing the democratic method of Government in India, and the adoption of the Parliamentary system demanded by the Congress leaders. The propaganda in England by

1. Wedderburn to Gokhale, July 29, 1913, Gokhale Papers, F 59, pt IV.

2. Letter of Dufferin to Kimberley, April 26, 1886. Quoted in B. L. Grover's *British Policy Towards Indian Nationalism* (1880-1909), p. 12.

3. Fowler to Elgin, Feb. 15, 1895, Fowler Papers, Microfilm reel Eur C 145/1, 3.

4. Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting, October 1, 1896, Vol. 1894-1896.

5. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), Feb. 21, 1895, 1321.

the Congress workers drew his attention in 1896. He reacted to it sharply and remarked : '.....They will not do us harm, but I do not want them to get the credit of having in any way forced our hand, or made us depart from the policy we have laid down..... Caine is very mischivious fellow and his speech seems to be upto his reputation.'<sup>1</sup> In 1899 Hamilton took notice of the paper INDIA and its influence with anxiety and suspicion. He expressed his apprehension of its impact on the Indian press, and informed the Indian Viceroy Lord Curzon for his quick action in fading its influence: ".....a very considerable proportion of the Indian Press, would, under the guiding influence of this "wretched little paper at home", have condemned the very act which their better instincts should take them one so much for the benefit of their country."<sup>2</sup> Obviously he was opposed to the Indian aspirations of the Indian people and their demands. In context with the prevailing conditions in India during the period of his regime he made it clear : "The liberties of British constitution did not apply, for instance, to criminal lunatics; and in India almost without warning, and apparently peaceful population might suddenly become as dangerous as criminal lunatics but with one object before them—to murder the class alien to them."<sup>3</sup>

Dadabhai Naoroji initiated the correspondence with Hamilton and insisted upon him to adopt a sympathetic attitude towards the Indian questions, and at the same time he criticised the policies of the Government. Hamilton was pleased with his manner of convincing, and in his opinion Dadabhai's request was 'overlaid with the most ridiculous and fantastic charges against the British Government'. This finally led to ending the correspondence of the Secretary of State with the Congress leaders in England.<sup>4</sup> However he was pleased to find that Wedderburn and his associates working in England on behalf of the Congress were adopting 'a more reasonable attitude'. Yet he was confident that the Congress was bound "to fail and bring discredit upon itself". He asserted that the Congress representatives in England were composed of the most 'extreme Radicals whose ideas were, on almost every con-

1. Hamilton to Elgin, December 31, 1896; Hamilton Collection (Private correspondence) Microfilm Reel 8, Vols. XIII, XIV, XV.

2. Ibid July 6, 1899, Vols. I/II Microfilm Reel 2.

3. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) August 5, 1897, 460.

4. Hamilton to Curzon December 13, 1900; Hamilton Collection Vols. I/II Microfilm Reel 2 EUR MSS Collection.

ceivable subject, opposed to the Natives in India, except in joining a certain section of them in abusing the Government' <sup>1</sup>

### Lord Morley

Many a Congressmen like W G Bonnerjee, Wedderburn Dadabhai Naoroji and A O Hume felt that Liberal Party, whenever it comes to power, could have sympathised much more with the political aspirations of the Indians than the Tories had done. When the Liberal Party formed the Government in Britain at the end of 1905 Morley was appointed as the Secretary of State for India who continued in the office till November 1910. The Indian leaders began to look at him with high hopes. But he too did not dislodge himself from the British traditions followed by his predecessors in supporting the popular feelings of the British nation. Before assuming the charge of Secretary of State he made an appreciation for Lord Curzon's rule in India and his unfortunate decision of the Partition of Bengal. He expressed his sentiments in a telegram addressed to Curzon on his resignation from the Indian Viceroyalty "Throughout your administration since your appointment as Governor General in 1898, my colleagues and I have endeavoured to give you constant support in the many measures of administrative reforms which you have initiated including the Partition of Bengal upon which we recently adopted your proposals" <sup>2</sup>

In 1906 Lord Morley was approached by Wedderburn and other Congress workers for the appointment of Dadabhai Naoroji to the India Council as the first Indian. But the India Office as a body against him, and Morley's feelings too were not strongly in favour of such appointment <sup>3</sup>. He also repudiated the ideal of democracy for India. He could not foresee a time when India would cease to be a "theatre of absolute and personal government" <sup>4</sup>. In due course of time the Indian leaders realised that nothing substantial could be wrested from 'the official Liberal Party' which often failed in its duty towards India. Notwithstanding Morley was more liberal and sympathetic in listening to the grievances of the Congress representative in England. He received Congress delegates in his office and elsewhere very cordially, and gave them a sympathetic hearing.

1 Hamiton to Curzon October 24 1900 Hamilton Collection Micro Reel 2

2 Morley to Curzon 16th August 1905 Morley Collection (Correspondence of Viscount Morley) Microfilm Reel 2 MSS 573/87

3 Gokhale to Wadia, Nov 1, 1906 Gokhale Papers

4 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) June 6 1907 879 579

Among those who held interviews included Gokhale, Cotton, Banerjea, Mehta, and these all were very much pleased with his general, cordial and friendly attitude.<sup>1</sup>

### Montagu

The British officials could humiliate the Indian leaders in England unhesitatingly, as they did in the case of Tilak while he was in England in 1919. He was ignored deliberately by Montagu-the then Secretary of State for India by not inviting him to a tea party which he gave in honour of Lady Chelmsford at the India Office. Besides his name was omitted in all the official communications.<sup>2</sup> Another interesting incident reveals how the British statesmen were unsympathetic to the Indian leaders, and their claims. In 1919 G. S. Khaparde-an associate of Tilak, who was in England as a Congress delegate interviewed with Montagu and sought his help in arranging seats for the Indian delegates in the gallery of the House of Lords. Montagu laughed at the idea and suggested Lord S. P. Sinha for the purpose. During their talks on the Government of India Bill which denied the right of self-determination, and a primary right of citizenship, Montagu lost his temper and remarked that he could not 'convince the unconvinced.'<sup>3</sup>

It is clear from the foregoing that British Government in dealing with the Indian demands for political reform displayed at first an attitude of indifference and then of coldness and of hostility. The Congress movement was not liked by the British official circle. But it was difficult for the officials to suppress it on account of its strictly constitutional character. Therefore attempts were made to weaken the movement. The Muslims were encouraged to keep themselves away from the Congress. Morley wrote to Minto, "Among other good effects of your Mohammedan deliverance is this that it has completely deranged the plans and tactics of our Cottonians; that is to say it had prevented them from any longer presenting the Indian Government as the ordinary case of a bureaucracy versus the people. I hope that even my stoutest Radical friends will see that the problem is not quite as simple as this."<sup>4</sup> The members of landed aristocracy and upper classes were also encouraged to oppose the

1. Alfard to Wacha, September 8, 1908. Gokhale Papers.

2. Khaparde Collection; His Diary 14-6-1919.

3. Khaparde Collection; His Diary 8-12-1919.

4. Morley to Minto, About Mohammedan Deputation, Oct. 26, 1906, Morley Papers.

Congress<sup>1</sup> More important was the attitude of the officials of creating division in the ranks of the Congress by rallying the moderates to their side

### Leaders of the British public opinion, their attitude

Some of the leading representatives of the British public opinion became interested in the Congress demands and expressed definite attitude Cladstone-a liberal leader is reported to have taken a sympathetic view when he supported the system of representative institutions and popular representation for India<sup>2</sup> Samuel Smith observed that the Indians thought the British nation to be a just and good, and that the English officials stood between them and their just rights Mr Smith served the Indian Parliamentary Committee actively and advocated the Indian cause in the Parliament and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Charles Bradlaugh, who happened to be in India in 1889, was a great supporter of the Congress in England, and championed its cause Between 1888-1890 he strongly pleaded for the Indian cause, and asked questions in Parliament on almost all important matters affecting India He introduced two bills in 1890 which provided for the enlargement of the Councils and the extension of their functions In 1892 several British members of the Parliament such as Seymour Keay, Richard Temple, C E Schwann, Mac Neil pressed for the incorporation of the elective system in the India Council Bill<sup>4</sup> Several Englishmen in England who remained indisposed with the Congress and its movement in England till the end of their life included prominently A O Hume, Sir David Yulu, William Wedderburn Sir Henry Cotton, Dr H V Rutherford and G B Clark The Indian group in England were inclined to become a *small set* though suspected in their fellow liberals, yet they were very active and had considerable influence they conducted for the Congress propaganda<sup>5</sup> In 1892 Dadabhai

1 INDIA, January 1890, p 4 Also Morley to Minto, 22 June 1906 Possible counterpoise to the Congress

2 Report of the Indian National Congress 6th Session 1890 (Calcutta) p 18 Speech of Madan Mohan Malviya

3 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) 28th March 1892 116 His speech wherein he emphasised on the representative character of the Congress and told that the Congress was loyal and constitutional in its demands and activities

4 Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) 28th March 1892 73, 75 & 112

5 Thomson and Garra: *Rise and Fulfilment of the British Rule in India* pp 543-44

Nazroji was elected to the Parliament, and Sir William Wedderburn in 1893. The latter served India in Parliament for seven years to his credit. There was hardly any matter which he could not bring to the notice of Parliament. Sir Henry Cotton fought for the Indian cause in the British Parliament, and informed the M. Ps. regarding the Indian public opinion. He advocated the views of the Congress and very often put the questions on Indian affairs such as military charges made to the war office which were drawn from the Indian revenues, Indian Press Act and other questions relating to the economic and political situation in India.<sup>1</sup> He exercised a great influence in the British public and the leaders. The British Congress Committee recognised his services in appreciation for his work for India.<sup>2</sup> Keir Hardie and Dr. Rutherford were other members of the Parliament who participated in Indian debates very actively and served the Indian cause.<sup>3</sup>

### Conservatives

The Congress representatives in England hoped very little from the Conservatives. After a meeting with a few British Tory members of Parliament such as Lord Percy and Lord Mayo, Gokhale formed the following impression: "I confess, I did not at all feel at home with these men—their ideas about India being derived mainly from official and Anglo-Indian sources. It is only when you talk to those men that you realise the advantage of having to deal with Liberals....."<sup>4</sup> In 1911 the Government of India forwarded a recommendation and proposed for the reduction of military expenditure. Some Conservative leaders arranged themselves against the just and important demand and carried a vigorous campaign in England against the proposals. Lord Curzon argued that the question had to be looked upon not merely from the Indian standpoint but also from the Imperial standpoint, and thus he opposed any such reduction.<sup>5</sup> However, the Conservatives

1. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) June 23, 1903, 1502-4; also August 15, 1903, 559.

2. Minutes of the British Congress Committee, Meeting January 4, 1910: Vol. November 30, 1909 - December 10, 1919.

3. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons) June 25, 1903, 114; also July 21, 1908, 1695.

4. Gokhale to Vaman Rao July 17, 1908: Gokhale Papers, F. N. 203, Vol. II.

5. Confidential Reports of the Native Newspapers of Bombay SAMACHAR (62) 7th of November, 1911.

were sometimes not discourteous, and granted interviews liberally to the Indian leaders. A number of them were having personal and intimate affiliations with the Congressmen. But these were not 'absolutely confidential' telling nothing of their intentions very frankly. Yet some progress to establish friendly relations with this section could be made<sup>1</sup> in 1914 Lord Crewe granted a long interview to the Congress delegates who visited England to place their grievances before the British Nation. This interview of about two hours was described by the British workers as "a most friendly hearing," and Crewe's generosity of accepting the principle of Indian representation in the Council together with his promise to make a proposal for the purpose<sup>2</sup>

There are three stages in the development of the Conservative attitude—apathy, indifference and hostility. In 1893 June 2 Herbert Paul's resolution on simultaneous examination was carried by 84 to 78 votes. But this was met with criticism and opposition from the Conservatives. George Russel, the Under Secretary of State then stressed that India was composed of many races of which the intellectually superior were deficient in ruling qualities and the turbulent and fierce tribes would resent the administrative control of the former. The Government of India, he held, was a sacred and in some respects 'a perilous charge' and "in administering it, we must be equally on our guard against allowing ourselves to be carried away by theories, however specious by appeals to sentiment, however just, or even by the mistaken application of principles in themselves sound"<sup>3</sup>

### **The Liberals, Socialists and Radicals**

From the beginning the Liberals had expressed sympathetic attitude towards Indian problems. The Congress leaders had high expectations from them. But they showed a moderate approach to the Indian problems, and steering their path between conservative and radical opinions they championed a timid policy. In the long run they also did not show a bold attitude in conceding the demands of the Congress.

The Indian leaders in England received a considerable support from the Socialists and Radicals. In 1897 Dadabhai Naoroji

1. Wedderburn to Gokhale 6th October 1910 Gokhale Papers File No. 579 Pt. III

2. Ibid May 12, 1914, Pt. IV

3. Parliamentary Debates (H. use of Commons) June 2, 1893 127-131

realised the value of such allies, and told the 'Hindu Patriot' which considered it a 'dangerous policy': "You will realise the value of the help we are getting from Socialists.....it is unexpected good future that the Indian cause has been taken up by a powerful and advancing organisation to whom the future largely belongs ....."<sup>1</sup> George Hamilton - the Secretary of State for India recognised the fact that the Congress representatives in England were aligned with the extreme section of the Radical Party. Therefore all the Indian debates were carried on Party Lines. The Radicals though small in number, made attacks on the Government and the defence always came from the Conservatives who were confident of pursuing their policies rigidly and strictly. Even the Radicals could be beaten on the motions, if they formed their majority. Kimberley had an experience when he had a resolution, carried against him to the effect that the examination for the Indian Civil Service, should be simultaneous in England and India.<sup>2</sup>

In 1906, the British Committee enlisted the support of about sixty members of the Parliament consisting largely of Socialists, Labour Nationalists and Liberals who were expressive of the following sympathetic sentiments: "We, members of British House of Commons remembering how much human civilisations is indebted to India and hoping she may have yet a more glorious future, send hearty greetings to the Indian National Congress in Calcutta. Believing that nations cannot secure the fullest development of which they are capable without free representative institutions, we hope the time is not far distant when India will have a Nationalist Parliament, and a large system of Local Self-Government."<sup>3</sup>

Hyndman, leader of the Socialist Democrats addressed a letter of challenge to Morley in 1907. It was done in sympathy with Lala Lajpat Rai on his deportation and others. The Socialist democrats of London drafted a resolution and adopted in other towns also in England. In the letter Hyndman advocated India's case and criticised the policy of liberal Government. On this, one of the native papers felt that there was atleast 'one section of the English public who sincerely sympathised with us in our troubles.'<sup>4</sup> A year before, the same Socialist leader pub-

1. Masani, R. P: Dadabhai Naoroji - The Grand Old Man of India, 398.
2. Hamilton to Curzon, November 13, 1902: Hamilton Papers Quoted in 'British Policy towards Indian Nationalism' p. 223.
3. INDIAN REVIEW Vol. III, January 1907, p. 52.
4. Confidential Report on the Native Newspapers of Bombay; PATRIOT (13) 15th June, 1907.



lished an article entitled, "Our Dead Failure in India" in which he dealt with the defects of the British administration in India, the famines in India, increased unemployment of the Indian people. Reviewing the article the Hindu Patriot of Bengal concluded "The impoverishment of the people is directly due to the annual drain on Indian revenues, and the day when this unrighteousness levy will be diminished, will be hailed with delight"<sup>1</sup>

### The Labour Party

As early as 1911 the British Committee of the Congress enlisted the support of M. O. Grady a Labour leader and member of Parliament through Ramsay MacDonald who worked for the Congress in and outside the Parliament. He participated in the deliberations and programme of the British Committee.<sup>2</sup> But in the later years (1914-1920) the Labour Party and its leaders showed greater sympathy for the political aspirations of the Congress, endorsed in its conference the policy of 'Home Rule for India' believing that the time has arrived when 'our brother in all parts of India are capable of controlling their own affairs—equally along with South Africa, Australia and other British Dominions'. It pledged 'to assist in every way possible to bring about much desired reform', and desired the Labour M. Ps. to do all in their power upon the Government without any delay, in order to give their just rights the right of self-determination which had been due to them throughout all time.<sup>3</sup> G. Lansbury another Labour leader wrote to Lajpat Rai on January 22, 1918 telling him to extend the full support for the constitutional agitation then going on in England to free India.<sup>4</sup>

The Congress veterans had already suffered at the hands of Conservatives. They also received very little support from Liberals. Now they were having a lingering hope in the Labour Party. The young India was looking forward eagerly and counting upon 'Labour inasmuch as the same way that old India relied upon Liberals. Perhaps this was more right in the instinct than was old India whose demands for free institutions were met by the response from

1 Ibid 11 September, 1906

2 Wedderburn to Gokhale June 23, 1911 Gokhale Papers File No 579 pt, IV

3 Vide Department of Home (Political B) Progress May 1918 No 160 (Secret) Extracts from Agenda discussed at the 7th Annual Conference on January 23, 1918 in the Albert Hall Nottingham

4 Vide Department of Home (Political B) Progress May 1918 No 160 (Secret)

Liberal leaders, that they could foresee a time when India would be given "a measure of self-Government" approaching that which has been granted in the Dominions.<sup>1</sup> Such a hope was not without foundations. At that time it was the most living organisation in England 'working hand in hand in their great mission of democratising the whole world'. The Home Rulers in England such as Major D. Graham, John Scurr, Countess De La Waru, Miss Barbara Villiers, Baptista, and Dr. Nihal Singh were in close touch with a great exponent of Socialist leader George Lansbury who was also the Editor of the Labour Weekly 'The Herald' and a stalwart of the Indian movement. He carried it whole-heartedly and was considered its "fountain head" inspiring several others. Among others, who joined him in this campaign, were Arther Henderson, Philip Snowden, Ramsay Macdonald, W. Aderson and J. H. Thomes who had been brought to their way of thinking and looking at the Indian questions.<sup>2</sup> These persons expressed sympathetic views in the Parliament and on the platform about the political aspirations of India, and her struggle for self-government. The British Parliamentary Labour Party even sent a telegram to the Indian National Congress at its Amritsar Session in 1919 conveying its 'fraternal greetings', and desiring 'to assume its fullest sympathy and support in the continuance of their struggle for achievement of complete self-government within the Empire'. It recognised the inadequacy of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and stated: ".....British Labour trusts that a new era for India is dawning and will do its utmost to secure for her political and economic freedom."<sup>3</sup>

In view of the above study of the British attitude it can be said that few British statesman gave any serious thought to the Indian problem as a factor in the relations between India and England. The British opinion on Indian issue was confused and lacked clarity of thinking. The Congress agitation in England found no sympathetic response from the Conservatives. Their attitude was even marked with coldness and opposition to Indian demand of political reform. The Conservatives, in general, stood for the status quo.

1. Modern Review, Vol. XXV, No 3, March 1919, p, 293.

2. Vide Department of Home (Political-Deposit) Progs, December, 1918 Nos. 10 (Secret): Weekly Report of the Director Central Intelligence, 20th October 1918.

3. Vide Department of Home (Political-B) D. L. O. Progs. January 20, 1920 No 279,282 & K. W. Appendix (i) Excerpts from the speech of M. K. Gandhi at Congress Session Published in the TRIBUNE of Lahore 31-12-1919.

To them the application of force was the legitimate method of maintaining the status quo. They did not like any radical reform and the imperial considerations were uppermost in their mind. If concessions were inevitable they wanted to make the reforms as conservatives as possible.

The Liberals powerful in British politics after 1905, showed some sympathy. They stood for change. But they behaved with caution and were modest in their proposals. India held high expectations from the Liberals but they were regarded out of proportion. On the whole they showed a moderate approach to India's imperial connection and were in agreement with the conservatives on important Indian questions. The Radicals, Labourites and Socialists with radical approach towards most questions had shown sympathy. But they were without any effective influence in British politics. There was little inclination on the part of Parliament to examine the Indian problems in relation to Indian political aspirations. The considerations of imperial interest and question of law and order continued to dominate its attitude. India to most of its members was a national and not an issue of controversy or of the party politics. On the whole, therefore the British attitude towards Indian problem was marked with lack of clarity and serious thought. There was no correct appreciation of the developing political situation by any influential section of British political opinion. This led to the unsatisfactory state of the Indian political problem and the consequent rise of a new spirit of political activity under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

IT will be now proper to evaluate the propaganda work carried on by the British Committee in England on behalf of the Congress. Stock taking of the work of the British Committee may be classified into the achievement and failure.

### **The success of the propaganda**

Although the Congress agitation in England lacked that vigour and influence which was its marked characteristic in India yet it was one time an important political force in England and contributed in a marked way towards the enlightening of British opinion in England. The establishment of the British Committee was indeed a very important event.

### **Organisation of systematic and sustained agitation**

A notable achievement of the British Committee was the organisation of a systematic and sustained Congress activity in England. Efforts to educate British opinion on Indian affairs had been made earlier than the Congress. But such were more or less individual efforts and failed to evolve a sustained programme of agitation. With the starting of the British Committee Congress propaganda was placed on an active and organised footing. The British Committee was the only political organisation in England which had to its credit a record of sustained activity and did some useful work in propagating India's cause through such agencies as the Press, the Platform and the Parliament. Leaders of the British Committee made serious efforts to rally the support of the British people and the Parliament for reforms advocated by the Congress. In a single year alone more than one hundred public meetings were arranged by the British Committee, and speakers were supplied to numerous other social and political gatherings where the problem of India was discussed. INDIA continued to be powerful organ of the British Committee for bringing to the notice of the British rulers the diffe-

rent aspects of Indian subjects. The best results were obtained by the visits of leading Congressmen to England, who by their tactics and ability, tried to influence British audience. They addressed a number of public meetings, held interviews with members of Parliament, Editors, and other public men and also addressed several associations and other select audience. Gokhale's campaign in Yorkshire and Lancashire was considered a brilliant success. He had gratifying reception by the Undergraduates of the Cambridge Union, where his motion for favour of more popular institutions for India was carried by 161 to 62 votes.<sup>1</sup>

The British Congress Committee also corresponded with the members of the Government and sought to influence them. Sir Henry Fowler — The Secretary of State for India in 1894 — was deeply moved by one of the letters which the British Committee sent to him on July 1, 1894. In this letter the British Committee criticised Mr Westland's Budget in context with the financial condition of India — heavy and unpopular burdens on the Indian taxpayer which was, as a whole, fatal and string arrest of its development. The subsequent proceedings in the House of Commons followed by the debate on the Indian Budget, resulted in Dadabhai's motion for the Parliamentary inquiry which wrung from Mr Fowler the appointment of the Welby Commission on Indian Expenditure and apportionment of charges between India and U. K.<sup>2</sup>

### Increase in the volume of propaganda

More important was the activity of the Indian Parliamentary Committee who worked in the Parliament effectively, and left a great imprint on the British Government. George Hamilton — the Secretary of State for India realised in 1897 the fact and wrote to Elgin, the then Viceroy of India. "Wedderburn's motion was chiefly noticeable for the vigorous and effective attack of Mr Bhowngree on the tactics of the Congress whose motion Wedderburn was engineering. It is true that the motion was supported by 90 members, but this was mainly due to Dilkie<sup>3</sup> forcing a division and carrying with him a number of radicals."<sup>4</sup> *On another occ*

1 William Wedderburn. Allan Octavian Hume p. 99

2 W. Wedderburn. A. O. Hume, p. 95

3 Charles Dilkie was one of the active members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee

4 Hamilton to Elgin : January 29 1897. Hamilton Collection EUR MSS (Private Correspondence) Microfilm Reel t, Vols I, II & III pt

sion he informed the Indian Viceroy regarding the activity of Dada-bhai Naoroji in the British Parliament, whose fearless and forceful advocacy of Indian cause was specially noted by him. He said, "This all, he did with the confidence that he had an influence at the India Office, and could 'act as an efficient intermediary' between the Secretary of State and various interests and individuals in India."<sup>1</sup> The influence of the Congress agitation was spreading wide.

As indicated by the Annual Report of the British Committee 1894, the work done by the Indian Parliamentary Committee was noteworthy. During 1893 about 400 questions were asked. In the first month of the year about 200 questions were put in the Parliament—most of these were initiated and advocated by the members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. These questions covered a wide range of subjects including Indian Reform, Indian finance simultaneous examinations for Civil Service etc.<sup>2</sup> During its existence the appointment of the Welby Commission in 1895 was a great achievement. It was the result of the Congress efforts in England. The British Committee availed of every opportunity in furthering the Indian cause. It established its contacts with several other associations and organizations which helped and supported the Congress agitation. The workers of the British Committee contacted prominent personalities for the purpose, and requested them to include the Indian cause in their programme. Allan Hume—a moving figure of the Committee met A. G. Symonds who himself was very anxious to place the Indian grievance in the National Reform Union, and afforded facilities for the inclusion of Indian reform in the programme of the Association.<sup>3</sup> They even arranged for public meetings which were attended by Naoroji, Caine, Gordon Hewart and Wedderburn under the Chairmanship of M. P. Stanhope. On the suggestion of Mr. Symonds three leaflets were prepared for distribution under the headings: 'Indian Finance', 'Military Expenditure' and 'Indian Frontier Policy and the Security'.<sup>4</sup>

### **Sympathetic British support**

The British Committee also succeeded in enlisting the sympathy

1. Hamilton to Elgin : April 2, 1897 : Hamilton Collection.

2. INDIA, December 1894, p. 365.

3. Vide Minutes of the British Committee, Meeting July 10, 1894 and July 17, 1894, Vol. Jan. 2, 1894-Dec. 1, 1896.

4. Ibid, April 9 and May 14, 1895.

and support of leading British politicians which was one of the aims of the Congress. It is not known that a number of important persons and leaders of the British opinion associated themselves with the British Committee and expressed sympathetic attitude towards Congress and its demands. In 1890, Sir Charles Dikie M. P. after a visit to India, declared that "the Congress movement really represented the cultivated intelligence of the Country, that those ridiculed it did harm to the Imperial interests of Britain, bitterly 'wounding and alienating men who are justified in what they do, and who do it in reasonable and cautious form and who ought to be conciliated by being met half way'.<sup>1</sup> Another important member of Parliament who became the active sympathiser of the Congress movement and championed its cause vigorously was Charles Bradlaugh. Since the death of Fawcett, no member of Parliament so whole-heartedly and incessantly worked for India as Bradlaugh. His interest in India is indicated by the fact that he made India a special object of his sympathetic attention even in the days when the whole energy of his mind and his entire resources were required to conquer the obstinacy of the House of Commons in order to retain his seat in it.<sup>2</sup> He returned to Parliament again in 1886 from Northampton in the Liberal interest while the Tories were in power. In reply to a Congress Address in 1889, Bradlaugh said: "I feel I should like to have the title that some have given me in sneer and some in hearty meaning of "Member of India"<sup>3</sup> His advocacy of Indian cause is well known.

Others who became active sympathisers of the Congress movement as a result of the activities of the British Committee included Lord Northbrook, Lord Ripon and Lord Kimberley. Lord Northbrook favoured the introduction of the elective principle and expressed his regret that Lord Cross Bill made no provision for it.<sup>4</sup> Kimberley maintained that the notion of Parliamentary representation of so vast a Country was although a wild imagination, yet he favoured the introduction of a partially elective system.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately the amendment, known as Kimberley clause, was adopted which

1. Problems of Great Britain Vol. II: Charles Dikie (London 1890) pp 146-147.

2. Natesan G. A. & Co Madras (3rd Ed.) The Friends of India Series, Charles Bradlaugh-A Sketch of His Life and His Services to India, p. 46

3. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1889, p. 88

4. Parliamentary Debates (House of Lords) 1890, p. 58.

5. Ibid, 62-79-80.

by empowering the Governor-General in Council with the approval of the Secretary of State in Council to make regulations as to the conditions of nominating the additional members permitted<sup>1</sup>, though it did prescribe the adoption of the elective principle.

### The Deputations in England

A significant achievement of the activities of the Congress in England was the success attributed to its deputation in enlisting British sympathy to the Indian cause. The congress-men claimed good results by the visits of such prominent Congress leaders as Sir P. S. Mehta, S. N. Banerjea, G. K. Gokhale and Bhupendra Basu, who stirred the imagination of the British nation by their speeches, and personal interviews. One of the delegates of the Congress deputation to England in 1910 described that no deputation to England on the scale of 1890 backed by the organization, and the resources then at their disposal was repeated though the results achieved by the deputations were unique in the history of the Congress movement.<sup>2</sup> Besides the several public meetings in big towns of England, Wales and Scotland, the Congress deputations had interviews with the British leaders and statesmen. One of the several such interviews was with Gladstone—a Liberal leader who assured them to speak at the second reading of the Lord Cross' Bill 1890-91 on the expansion of the Councils, and the support of the elective principle. Their aspirations came true when Gladstone urged in the Parliament: "What should be conceded was a real and living representation of the Indian people." The elective principle as such was not conceded but a definite advance towards it was made. The delegates, sent by the Indian National Congress, left a great impression upon the mind of British audience. They were accorded warm receptions by the British associations very often. In 1905 'The Fabian Society' held a special meeting to hear Gokhale while the Conservative Government was in power.<sup>3</sup> These developments were seriously noted by the Home Government which became zealous of the success of the Indian delegation. It was of the opinion that the less the members of the Congress deputation visited England the better. George Hamilton—the Secretary of State for India wrote to the Viceroy Lord Curzon with some apprehension and anxiety

1. Ibid, 99.

2. Banerjea, S. N. : A Nation in Making, p. 105.

3. William Wedderburn: A. O. Hume, p. 99.



in mind. He remarked, "To see a *Prime Minister* and the *Secretary of State* hustled and pushed about in a society crowd induce them to put a low estimate upon the authority and position of those hustled, and the tendency on the part of all sections of society to accord an unprecedent to any one who is supposed to be a *Prince*, gives them a most inflated idea of their own importance" <sup>1</sup>

Dadabhai Naoroji and William Wedderburn did a lot of work in the British Parliament bringing the needs of India before the English people. They were very much vocal in their criticism of the Government for not paying due attention to India's grievances. It was even admitted in the official circles that they used their whole influence ever since they had been in Parliament to discredit the Indian Government, and bring them into disrepute <sup>2</sup>. In 1906 Henry Cotton and C. E. Schwann—both members of Parliament were so active and keen about the discussion of the Indian subjects in the British Parliament, and the interviews with the Secretary of State and other high Government spokesmen that the Congress leader recognised with gratitude the labour and pains undertaken by these members of British Committee <sup>3</sup>.

### Press Activity

One of the important achievements of the Congress propaganda in England was the remarkable progress of press activity. During the period of the existence of the British Committee the output of political literature bearing information on India was very considerable. The *Journal "India"* was a remarkable success. The details of the press activity and its achievement have been discussed in the 3rd chapter.

### Emergence of Indian Associations

One of the important by-product of the activities of the British Committee was the emergence of a number of Indian organisations in England with the object of promoting feeling of nationalism and social fraternity among the Indians residing in England. These organisations had also political purposes and sought to influence British opinion on Indian affairs. Many of these associations were

1 Hamilton to Curzon October 1, 1907. Hamilton Collection Vols III IV and V Microfilm Reel 3. EUR MSS Collection.

2 Hamilton to Curzon February 22, 1909. Microfilm Reel 2.

3 Wacha to Sir William Wedderburn 5th July 1906. Gokhale Papers File No. 509, Pt IV.

founded and inspired by several members of the British Committee. It is indicated by official records that a number of Indian associations came into existence during the period of active work of the British Committee. Chief among them were Free India Society, London Indian Society, Indian Nationalist Society, Indian Union Society, London Indian Association, United India Club, All India political Club and Britain India Society. By far the most important was the London Indian Association started in 1913 by M. A. Jinnah, J. M. Parikh, Sarojini Naidu and others. Men of different Political complexions took part in its educative and social activities and there was "full discussion of Indian problems."<sup>1</sup> Dadabhai Naoroji, Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee were connected with several other organisations.

The major success of the Congress propaganda in England had been the increasingly growing interest of the British in Indian affairs. The constitutional changes made by the British from time to time have been claimed as a concession to the sustained propaganda. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 has been described as the success of the Congress agitation. Even opponents of the Congress like A. C. Trevor, a member of Governor General's Council characterised it as a "concession to political agitation".<sup>2</sup> It has also been asserted that the Congress agitation was at the root of the latest ideas on Reforms of 1909.<sup>3</sup> A certain section of the Press tried to present Lord Morley acting under the inspiration of Gokhale as the real author of the scheme of reforms.<sup>4</sup> It was due to its sustained propaganda that Congress was able to be recognised as a 'power' and became largely instrumental in negotiating with the British the constitutional progress in India. The Government records indicate that the Government realised that the Congress propaganda during the first World war could not be ignored in determining British policy towards India.<sup>5</sup>

### Support of the Labour Party

An outstanding achievement of the Congress movement in England was the effort to win the support and sympathy of the Labour Party which subsequently became a significant factor in the

1. Department of Home (Political-B) Progs. 406-408 of May, 1916.
2. Public Department, Progs. No. 181, August 1896. Trevor's Minutes.
3. B. B. Majumdar : Indian Political Associations, p. 370.
4. M. N. Das, India Under Morley and Minto, p. 205.
5. Depite of (Poll.A) July 1917, Progs. No. 294-295.

British politics. The success of the early Congress leaders in this direction inspired the Home Rulers to concentrate their efforts on winning the sympathy of Labourites for their cause. Since then there were persistent efforts by the Indian leaders to rally the support of the Labour. A number of persons, subscribing to the Congress programme joined the campaign in fighting with the anti-Indian feelings. Among such men, one was Mr S. Seed, who arranged a Conference to discuss what line of action should best be taken by the Socialists and the Labourmen of England to help the Indian National Movement. This conference was presided by James O'Gradey—a member of Parliament and also a Parliamentary Labour Party man.<sup>1</sup> Thus the British Committee enlisted a great support of the Labour members of Parliament who were their 'effective allies in the House of Commons'. William Wedderburn, Chairman of the British Committee valued their services so highly to India that he sent them a donation of £ 100 from the 'India Benefit Fund' on behalf of the British Committee, and even contributed in his private capacity.<sup>2</sup> Mr Ramsay Macdonald gave M. O. Gradey as the Delegate of Labour Party for the Indian constitutional agitation. He sympathised and helped the Congress deputation to Lord Crewe in favour of Gokhale's Education Bill. Gradey volunteered to try to get some leading Conservatives to join the deputation namely J. E. Smith, Lord Ronaldsbay and Sir Gilbert Park. In a dinner given by Sir Wedderburn in honour of Bhupendranath Basu to instruct the M. P.s and Editors was remarkably a success. Those who could not attend the function, being engaged with their previous commitments, wrote very cordial letters. These were chiefly Lord Leag, Courtney, Weardale and Ramsay Macdonald.<sup>3</sup> Among other sincere Labour friends one was Keir Hardie also an M. P. who contributed immensely to the activities undertaken by the Congress in England. In 1892 he advocated and championed the Congress cause in Parliament. He joined the Indian Parliamentary Committee in 1906 and tried to bring the Indian subjects an issue of British politics. Hence he brought an

1 W. Seed to Gokhale June 21 1908 Gokhale Papers File No. 203 Pt. III

2 Wedderburn to Gokhale August 10 1910 Gokhale Papers File No. 579, Pt. III

In March 1910 Gokhale placed a resolution before the Supreme Council for the expansion of Primary Education which afterwards was introduced as Elementary Education Bill in the Legislative Council in 1911.

3 Wedderburn to Gokhale June 29 1911, File No. 579 Pt. IV Gokhale Papers

amendment in the course of the Budget to place the salary of the Secretary of State for India on the British estimates. His opportune and searching questions on the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai, and his condemnation of the un-British and un-liberal policy advocated and initiated by Morley 'in utter defiance of public opinion and public meeting in India gained for Hardie a desired popularity in India'. He visited India in 1907 to have the first hand knowledge of the cause for the 'perfidious' visions of unrest and lawlessness which the fervid brains of the bureaucracy in India and unscrupulous news mongers had conjured up before the unsuspecting British public.<sup>1</sup>

There are several references in the Government records regarding the success of Congress activities in enlisting the sympathy of the Labour to the Indian cause. In 1918, the attitude of the Labour was more friendly towards India and its demand of Self-Government. Meetings were proposed in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, Edinburgh and Manchester in order to tone up and strengthen the Indian movement. The Labour Party was influenced greatly by the efforts of Joseph Baptista and Mrs. Annie Besant—both Home Rule agitators in England. On December 17, 1917 Baptista cabled to the Congress President congratulating Congress and wishing it a success, and also telling that the Labours responded to their agitation magnificently who were in genuine sympathy with aspirations of Indian nationalism.<sup>2</sup> Twenty Trades and Labour Councils including Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and others representing over 200,000 members pledged to support Home Rule for India. Baptista conveyed the feelings of the Hull trades, and Labour Council which instructed to send for inclusion its agenda a resolution in favour of India's Home Rule and which recommended 'new' constitution on lines of South Africa constitution with provincial autonomy with power for people to elect their own Government to be brought into operation.<sup>3</sup>

Another important Labour member, seriously interested in Indian affairs, was George Lansbury. In his election campaign he made Indian cause of reform an issue of his political activity. He openly declared, "I think a start must be made with self-Government for India. In that country there are 310 millions of human beings, being governed by British officials. They are asking why

1. Indian Review, Vol. VIII No. 10, October 1907, p. 760.

2. Vide Deptt. of Home (Political-A) Progs. May, 1918, No. 160 (Secret).

3. Ibid.

India, whose sons have fought to enable the Nations of Europe to secure self-determination should be denied the same right for themselves".<sup>1</sup>

Another Labour candidate John Scurr who stood for Buckingham held the same views in regard to India and advocated them. Major D. Graham Pole from East Crimstead constituency had sympathy 'to comprehend and appreciate our difficulties, our ideals and our aspiration's, and used all his influence to further the Indian cause, and did not forget Indian people'.<sup>2</sup>

Among the woman politicians of Britain who had sympathy with the Congress agitation mention may be made of Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Will Anderson, The Women's Party which put forward Mrs. Chrystable Pankhurst declared in their programme : "Any proposed change in the system of governing India to be submitted to the imperial Parliament after it has been clearly explained to the British people in what way the system is to be reconciled with racial differences, the caste system, the peculiar position of Indian women, and Indian conditions and traditions".<sup>3</sup>

### Important Individuals and their support

The British Committee accumulated 'a great mass experience of inestimable value to the Indian movement'. It established connections with various political associations and acquired a small but a useful library and through a subsidiary organisation manifested weekly organ. Greater than all were the men who devoted much of their time and talents without compensation of any kind to the work of the Committee namely Sir Wedderburn, Hume, Schwann, Clark, Douglas Hall, Dr. Rutherford, Parikh, Lord Fenner Brockway and several others who were valuable assets to any movement.<sup>4</sup> They possessed intimate knowledge of the political machinery in England, and were genuinely and deeply interested in India.

Thus the Congress activities in England did a valuable work in obtaining the support of some Englishmen who proved valuable in keeping the Indian questions alive in Parliament and elsewhere. The strenuous Indian agitation also did much to undo the mischief of the opponents of the Indian aspirations and counterchecked the

1. Modern Review Vol. XXV No. 3, 1919, p. 291 : Quoted in an article of St. Nihal Singh "New Parliament And India".

2. Ibid.

3. Modern Review Vol. XXV No. 3, 1919, p. 292.

4. Ibid, May 1919, No. 5, p. 532. "The British Committee" A Retrospect.

activities of the India Office which always popularised the official view of the Indian questions. India Office was, indeed, nervous about propaganda for Indian Independence right upto 1946 and the British Government had to keep a secret vigil on the Congress activities in London.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the Congress propaganda cleared the British vision on the question of the Constitutional nature of the Congress movement and its emphasis on the demand of responsible government within the British Empire, and forced the attention of the Congress partially. This was one of the significant and positive contribution of the British Committee.

### **Failure of the Propaganda**

Though projected with great energy the Congress movement in England, failed in its ultimate object. It could not succeed in making Indian subject an issue of the British politics. Nor did it get encouraging response from the influential sections of the British public opinion. Various views regarding the failure of the Congress movement in England have been expressed. Lord Fenner Brockway who is the only living close associate of the British Committee in England, is of the opinion that the British Committee's propaganda was not successful largely because of the Congress attitude to the War. He admits that the English workers for India were 'outside stream of the public opinion and even radical opinion' that can, in no way, be said the general public opinion of Britain.<sup>2</sup>

Walter S. B. Mc Laren-a M. P. and one of the early workers for the Congress Committee is on the view that Britain had neither time nor trouble to listen to the Indian questions. They were busy in their own problems and the various political parties thought of their own prospects rather than of Indian problem. He suggested that 'four or six leading Indians, alongwith Naoroji would go on a systematic tour over the Country (England), and address public meetings arranged by the Liberal associations of England. It 'would do immense good'.<sup>3</sup>

There is yet another view that agitation in England failed because of great criticism in India of the Congress work in England. The agitation was being carried out at the expenses of the poor people of India. It was further considered that instead of doing things in

1, Letter of Fenner Brockway to the author, dated January 10, 1967.

2, Letter of Lord Fenner Brockway to the Author dated December 14, 1966.

3, Vide Minutes of the British Committee: Meeting September 26, 1889, Vol. Juhe 20, 1889-October 2, 1890.

England, Indians should have concentrated their activities in India on larger scale, because to convince the Britishers was beyond their power<sup>1</sup> A study of the Congress agitation in England, however, leads to the conclusion that no single factor was responsible for its failure The movement failed due to various reasons chief among them being the mistaken assessment of the British politics by the Congress leaders the organisational defects and the hostility of the official class and changed character of Indian politics after the world war first

### Wrong assessment of the British attitude

The Indian agitators, who trusted in the democratic instinct of the British people and their sense of justice, committed an error It was wrong to think that an imperialistic nation would part with the powers to a dependent nation, and yield all the political privileges without violent struggle They were wrong to judge the British people by their outward appearance alone, while their hearts were 'full of poison' The Congress workers thought the Liberals to be their allies and supporters to their cause But on Indian questions the Liberals were only liberals in name They joined hands with the Conservatives "In thinking of India only as a pivot of the British Empire, as the brightest jewel in the Imperial diadem"<sup>2</sup> In 1905 while the Liberal Party was in power, Lala Lajpat Rai visited England as one of the Congress delegates He very clearly told that 'the official Liberal Press' cared 'Precious little of India or Indian subjects' Their party purposes were not served by the same<sup>3</sup> D E Wacha another moderate leader gave up all hopes which he expected from Morley and his Liberal Government in 1907 when he remarked "For my part, I have absolutely lost all faith in him This man has done infinitely greater harm to Indian than any Secretary of State"<sup>4</sup>

The Conservatives as well as the Liberals were opposed to the Indian demand of political and constitutional reform of Parliamentary type Even the programme of reforms undertaken by the so called 'Radical Lord Morley did not go beyond 'a few trifling

1 Confidential Report on the Native Newspapers of Bengal Dacca PRAKASHI January 2, 1890

2 Vide Indian Review October 1907, p 736 Article by R G Pradhan on 'Indian Affairs in England'

3 Lajpat Rai to Babu Sahab August 3 1905 Gokhale Papers F No 296

4 Wacha to Gokhale September 23, 1907, F No 569 Pt IV Gokhale Papers

concessions not worth the paper on which they were written.' Only some members of a handful of Labour, Social Democrats favoured the Home Rule, who had no power to exercise their influence and win the majority. Their influence was not potent enough to control the national policy. Besides a few number of persons like Hyndman, Beestey, Dr. Rutherford, Bradlaugh, Mrs. Bonner favoured the cause of Indian dependence due to their sense of humanity. But these individuals were 'few and far between'. Their influence too could not be great enough on national policy to mould it. The British nation as a whole would 'naturally resist any movement on our part to reassert our national movement.'<sup>1</sup> As early as 1906, S. R. Rana-an Indian patriot in Paris warned Sir William Wedderburn-the Chairman of the British Committee that what they expected from the Liberals was a disillusion as the past experiences have proved it. Whenever the British interests were involved, Liberals joined the Conservatives regardless of their political differences. He made a reference to the Liberal Leader Kimberley-the Secretary of State for India who plainly avowed the policy that "India shall be permanently under British rule". They even would retard the progress of the Country in the right direction. He said: "I therefore, cannot at all see what grounds you have to believe that the Liberal Government will give what the Natives of India demand, and what the Conservative Government has refused."<sup>2</sup>

It is also difficult to say that Congress deputations to England were successful in changing the political situation in England to any appreciable extent. The Congress agitation failed to penetrate into the British politics. From the very beginning the Congress workers in England had to face a hostile and apathetic attitude of the conservatives. Therefore the want of sympathy from the conservatives drove the Congress into the arms of the Liberal Party. Liberals were considered to be sympathetic towards Indian aspirations. The meetings were generally organised and addressed by the liberals. The audience in these meetings mostly consisted of Liberals. But the Congress did not gain much from them when they came to power. They were also swept away by the surging tide of imperial sentiment. Gokhale who was sent by the Congress as its delegate to England to negotiate with the Liberal Government for reforms felt disgusted. In his farwell talk he declared that

1. *Vide Indian Review* Vol. III No. 11 October 1907, pp. 737-38.

2. S. R. Rana to William Wedderburn February 4, 1906 : Gokhale Papers, File No. 389 Pt. IV.



he would never come to England again, he expected no more work to be for India there and should therefore work in his own country. He spoke as if it were a crisis<sup>1</sup>. Later the Congress looked at Labour Party for sympathy and support. It believed in the right of self-determination and supported India's cause for political advancement. But it too expressed sympathy, and Indian demand of self government was not included in its official party programme. Thus the Congress agitation failed in its efforts to make Indian problem an issue of British party politics.

### **The Indian Parliamentary Committee, its ineffective role**

An important cause of the failure of the Congress propaganda in England was that the Indian Parliamentary Committee which was the main pillar of agitation could not exercise effective influence in the Parliament. It did not function as an organised group committed to the Congress programme. William Wedderburn, while explaining its programme, said that the organisation included two portions: (i) Those who were ready to actively advocate the Indian cause, and (ii) those who were prepared to give both sides an impartial hearing<sup>2</sup>. The number of active members was small, say between twenty and thirty. The London correspondent of the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, who criticised the British Committee for doing nothing in opposition to Fowler's decision not to give effect to Paul's Resolution of June 2, 1893, admitted that if the friends of the Congress proceeded to a division and the Government made it a matter of confidence not more than 20 or 30 would stand by their vote of last year<sup>3</sup>. On August 13, 1896 only thirty members supported Wedderburn's amendment which provided that accounts should be examined each year, and reported on by a select committee of the House<sup>4</sup>. Even after the formation of the Indian Parliamentary Committee debates on the Indian Budget took place in a very thin House. Except on a few occasions the opposition was more or less indifferent to Indian questions. In February 1898 when the Sedition Laws and the detention of the Natu Brothers were

1 Das, M. N., *India under Morley & Minto* p. 101

2 Vide *INDIA* October 1894, p. 305

3 *Ibid*, September 1894, pp. 258-59

4 *Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons)* August 13 1896 384 also Confidential Report on Native Newspapers of Bombay GUJRATI (105) 16th August, 1896

debated in Parliament, prominent members of the opposition did not participate and the discussion remained confined to a few members of the Parliamentary Committee. Lord George Hamilton remarked that Wedderburn was completely 'blown upon'.<sup>1</sup> On another occasion he informed the Indian Viceroy except Wedderburn nobody attempted to make himself offensive, (while the debates on Indian questions were being carried) nor brought unjust accusation against the Indian Government.<sup>2</sup> He felt that there was a lack of opponents (Congress supporters) worth taking notice of; as their power of speech in debate was so deteriorate from want of practice.<sup>3</sup>

Members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee, no doubt tried to raise the issues but hardly on any occasion they could succeed in rallying substantial support to their cause. In 1898 Harbert Roberts—the Secretary of the British Committee and the Indian Parliamentary Committee moved an amendment on the debate of Indian Accounts, and he practically moved a vote of censure for the legislation in connection with the Sedition and defamation. On that occasion no man of influence had shown any disposition to co-operate with 'Wedderburn and his allies' nor could the Congressmen get support from the great bulk of Radical Party in Parliament. The Government felt that their position was so strong as not to be moved so easily by such attacks. And thus, it was useless to hope for any support from the British members of Parliament. Hamilton wrote to Curzon : "Our position is so strong that, I think, we shall be able to lay down authoritatively the principles and procedure for the future which will make very clear to the Congress people in England that in the matter they cannot hope for any support.....in Parliament," Even the subjects, invoked in Parliament by the supporters of the British Committee, were of little importance, and left no imprint on the British Government. In this connection it is interesting to note the observation of George Hamilton—the Secretary of State for India in 1896 regarding such an important leader of Parliamentary Committee as William Wedderburn. He informed the Indian Viceroy : "...Wedderburn foolishly revived the Chitrol controversy and resuscitated the old charge of bad faith. It gave me chance, I wanted, and the

1. Hamilton to Elgin February 25, 1898 : Hamilton Collection Vol, III, Microfilm Reel 2.

2. Hamilton to Curzon, April 5, 1900. Hamilton Collection Vol. I/II Microfilm Reel 2.

3. Ibid, November 8, 1904. Ibid, August 5, 1898, also his letter of November 8, 1900.

collapse of the debate subsequently was an indication that the House considered, the defence of your Government conclusive' <sup>1</sup> Morley referred to the members of the Parliamentary Committee as 'Cotton & Co' In 1909 Morley spoke in the same tone when the reform bill was under consideration in the House of Commons Morley considered Cotton "a faithless sort of mortal, the key of his moral being is vanity, the root of all evil and there will be a certain amount of fuss" <sup>2</sup> But the Cabinet knew that the Radical criticism of the Bill in the commons would come to nothing The members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee could not dare to assume the heavy responsibility of wrecking the scheme The Government, therefore, hinted that they would stand no 'nonsense'

So were that Sir William Wedderburn and Cotton whose activity as a chief spokesmen of the Congress in Parliament cannot be recorded as impressive They could not get support except that of a very discouraging number of members of Parliament who were directly or indirectly associated with the Congress organisation Expectations from the Radicals and the Liberals for realisation of the Congress aspirations were imaginative as they did not support Congress cry in the Parliament The Radicals were losing their influence and their strength was crumbling more and more to pieces The Liberals on one occasion voted with the conservatives, one third walked out and only one third voted against <sup>3</sup> It is further interesting to note that the members of the British Committee also realised that they were unable to influence the Government and to secure support This was brought to the notice of the British Committee and admitted, that they failed to secure a place for a motion on Indian Army Expenditure and the demand that the salary of the Secretary of State for India should be placed on the British Estimates <sup>4</sup> Thus the members of the Indian Parliamentary Committee could not succeed in giving a satisfactory performance and the Government carried its business with little hostile discussion on Indian matters Therefore the Parliamentary Committee vanished long before the British Committee was closed down formally and officially Moreover the agitation in Parliament

1 Hamilton to Elgin February 21, 1896, Hamilton Collection Reel 1

2 Morley Papers Morley to Minto, Feb 25, 1909

3 Hamilton to Curzon August 3, 1909 Hamilton Collection Vol I/II Microfilm Reel 2

4 Vide Minutes of the British Committee, Meeting March 27 1906 Vol July 1906 October 1909

failed to make the Indian problem an issue of British party politics.

### Inadequate Funds

Another significant reason for the failure of the Congress propaganda was the unsatisfactory financial position of the British Committee. Since the beginning much difficulty was experienced in raising funds for the British work. In 1890 there was a move to stop publication of INDIA, as there was a great dearth of finances, and it was being conducted with great difficulties. Wedderburn and Hume appealed to the Congressmen to help as the Committee was facing a great 'inconvenience, trouble and anxiety.' Wedderburn warned: ".....Unless you and the rest of our Congressmen make up their minds to remit promptly, at any rate the balances of the sums.....the whole work of the Committee here must come to an end."<sup>1</sup> Discontinuance of INDIA was considered seriously which would have been 'disasterous to the Congress cause of India in England.' Wedderburn reported it to the Joint Secretary of the Congress: "It would involve a fatal break in the continuity of the Congress work, which hitherto has been steadily expanding; it would cause serious financial loss by breaking up a machinery erected with my labour and cost, and it would be the cause of depression to the friends, and rejoicings to the opponents or Indian aspirations.....And so impressed are.....some friends with evil consequences which must result if India 'is not represented in the British Press by a first class journal.'<sup>2</sup> Earlier in 1892 the British Committee experienced great difficulty in raising about £ 3,000 for its expenses. In a strongly worded letter to Congressmen, A. O. Hume complained of the 'inadequate sum, and even that, though promised, is paid so tardily that thousands of letters, circulars, and reminders are needed to get in even this ineffectual contribution.'<sup>3</sup> British officials were always anxious that this British Committee should receive no financial help from rich persons, and it felt a sigh of relief from the disclosure that Wedderburn, despite his repeated

1. Hamilton Collection: Microfilm Reel 8, Enclosure to the letter of Hamilton to Curzon Dec. 28, 1899 - A letter signed by A. O. Hume and W. Wedderburn October 13, 1899 addressed to the Secretary of the Committee and members of Standing Committees.

2. Wedderburn to D. E. Wacha, September 26, 1901, Gokhale Papers File No. 569 Pt. III (Wacha letters).

3. Vide INDIA May 13, 1892, p. 139: Hume's letter of Feb. 16, 1892.

protests, was supplied with inadequate funds for Congress work in England.<sup>1</sup>

During the period of 1912-1913, the British Committee and its organ INDIA fell into financial trouble. Wedderburn appealed to all the Congressmen in India with the judgement that the British work would 'receive a fatal injury' if the adequate funds were not supplied.<sup>2</sup> But nothing was done in this direction. Due to poor finances the Committee could not succeed in organising a vigorous agitation on a scale as that of in India.

### Weak leadership

Another significant cause of the failure of Congress agitation in England was the weak leadership of the movement. Lack of unanimity between its leading members led to difficulties in running the Congress activity in England smoothly. In 1897 W. S. Caine expressed a great dissatisfaction over the Committee's organization and its affairs due to the maladministration of the British Committee and its financial position. He also disapproved the methods and policies with regard to the paper INDIA. "I am so satisfied that there is neither the brains, the capacity nor the financial skill to carry out the idea of weekly journal."<sup>3</sup> Finally he withdrew himself from the British work of the Committee in 1901, and stopped "to take any part in the work of the Committee although his interest in India politics remained as keen as ever."<sup>4</sup> In 1899, Caine joined R. C. Dutta in his criticism of the work, methods and approach of the British Committee for the constitutional campaign in England. Both were of the opinion that INDIA was a luxury, and the money spent upon it could be more usefully spent upon public meetings.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Dutta also disapproved the policies and methods of the British Committee before George Hamilton - the Secretary of State for India in 1899, when he interviewed with him. Again when it was known that countervailing on sugar duties were about to be imposed in India, Wedderburn tried to get up an agitation against the British policy. R. C. Dutta 'nipped in

1 Hamilton Collection. Encl. to Curzon's letter to Hamilton Dec. 28 1899 - Microfilm Reel 2, Vols I II III LUR MSS Collection

2 Wedderburn to Gokhale, February 25, 1913 Gokhale Papers File No 579 Pt IV

3 W. S. Caine to Gokhale October 29, 1897 Gokhale Papers, I No 91

4 Ibid. December 12 1901

5 Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting October 3, 1899, Vol January 5 1897 - March 27, 1900

the bud this attempt.<sup>1</sup> In 1905, Henry Cotton - another active member urged 'a reliable and attractive paper'. But his demand was turned down by Wedderburn who did not believe in the possibility of improvement.<sup>2</sup> In 1907 Cotton refused to sign a Draft Manifesto to the Congress as the Manifesto was opposed to his views.<sup>3</sup> In 1918, H. E. A. Cotton wrote to S. K. Ratcliff expressing his dissatisfaction on the management and personal of INDIA paper. He disclosed his disliking of Dr. G. B. Clark, J. M. Parikh and Dr. H. V. Rutherford, who were holding charge for circulation of the journal.<sup>4</sup> In another letter W. Douglas Hall made similar remarks when he corresponded with Ratcliff: "The party in possession are notoriously averse to the kind of propaganda work which has been hitherto done in England....."<sup>5</sup> In 1917 Bhupendranath Basu did not favour the idea of sending Mrs. Besant to England, perhaps out of his personal grudge, as one of the members of the deputation as she was "a vain and ambitious woman." Her presence will be absolutely fatal to the deputation being seriously taken by the responsible leaders of the British public opinion.<sup>6</sup> Thus there was no unity of thought among the leaders of Congress movement in England so essential for the success of a political agitation. Furthermore the leaders of the Congress movement in England were not astute politicians. Wedderburn and Cotton were retired officials. Noaraji lacked all the qualities of a shrewd statesman. These three were the life and soul of the entire agitational activity in England. Effective guidance was therefore lacking.

### **Lack of Coordinated programme**

Closely connected with the weak leadership was the lack of coherence in the programme of the Committee, so essential for the success of a political movement. This was serious organisational

1. Hamilton to Curzon, April 14; 1899: Hamilton; Microfilm Collection Microfilm Reel 2. Vols. I II III, EUR MSS Collection.

2. Cotton to Gokhale, January 18, 1905; Gokhale Papers, File No. 125, C.

3. Wedderburn to Gokhale. December 5, 1907: Gokhale Papers, File No. 579. Pt. III.

4. Vide Department of Home (Political - Deposit). Progs, December, 1918, Nos. [19 (File 1) (Secret), Enclosure to the letter of Mrs. Newby 26th May 1918.

5. Home Department Pol. Deposit Progs Dec. 1918 No. 10.

6. B. N. Basu to Wedderburn, March 27, 1917: Chamberlain Papers Microfilm Reel 1, Encl. to Islington's letter addressed to Chamberlain.

defect of the British Committee and was responsible to a great extent for the failure of its agitation. During the period of 1919 the British Committee followed a policy of 'laissez faire' at a time when it was necessary that a strong propaganda was supposed to be conducted. While that body had been in a state of 'suspended animation', persons and societies, inimical to educated Indians had been carrying on 'active, persistent and vicious' campaign which needed to be counteracted by equally active and persistent pro-Indian propaganda. Indians for a generation made it possible for the British Committee to exist that the Committee would carry on such propaganda especially at a time when grave changes in Indian constitution were impending, and the British needed to be educated in regard to Indian aspirations, and Indian capacity for self Government. It was the considered opinion of several thoughtful Indian leaders that if the journal INDIA had been conducted with 'skill and vigour' and if it had championed the Congress cause it would have served a most useful purpose—for which it was maintained. But at a subsidized organ of the Congress, and even as a newspaper it had been far from a success especially ever since, the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme was published. Of all the views put forward since then by Indians the one that had received the least backing from it was the Congress view. It was useless to argue that the Congress propaganda failed only due to shortage of funds. Dr Clark who succeeded Wedderburn as the Chairman of the British Committee admitted that the Committee had funds at its disposal to undertake even special propaganda.<sup>1</sup> Lack of clarity and coherence in the programme of the Committee, the tone of its policy, loose control of the Congress over the Committee were attributed as the causes of the failure of propaganda. It was strongly felt that had a vigorous campaign in behalf of Indian dominionhood been carried on during the General Elections in Britain some enthusiasm and sympathy for India might have been roused. The Congress leaders should have run candidates for Parliament who could have taken interest for emancipation of India. Britons were interested in the Home Rule for India League during that period.<sup>2</sup>

The chief reasons for lack of enthusiasm and effective activity of the Congress may be summarised as the following

(1) The precise relationship between the Committee and

1 Vide Modern Review Vol XXV No 5 May 1919 pp 531-3

2 Modern Review Vol XXV No 3 March 1919 p 291

Congress were never defined properly. The omission was due to the fact that the men who ran the Committee and the men, who ran the Congress were the same, and 'partly due to the sense of courtesy innate in Indian character'.

(ii) At the time, Congress voted its annual subsidy to enable the Committee to keep going, the general lines along which that money was to be spent were not indicated, nor was any control even in cases of emergency reserved. This was a strange proceeding on the part of men who were agitating that Indians be given control over the national, provincial, and local purse of India. It was due to the short-sightedness and lack of providence.

(iii) From the very beginning of the birth of the Committee, they had been almost altogether non-Indians, and even the staff had been wholly non-Indian. Even the paid Secretary, who had the power to make or mar an organization, had been throughout a non-Indian. The paid Editor of the propaganda organ had always been a non-Indian.

(iv) The non-Indian members of the British Congress Committee, who controlled it, belonged from the very beginning mostly to a single British political party; as a consequence through choice or otherwise, their activities had been largely confined to members of that party. Party spirit in England was so strong that, to put it mildly, a Committee presided over by a man with distinctive party badge could not count upon the support of men belonging to other British Parties.<sup>1</sup>

### **Official attitude of hostility**

The progress of Congress agitation was seriously checkmated by the suspicious and hostile attitude of the Official class, George Hamilton, who had been the Secretary of State for India for more than seven years (1895-1903) remained constantly suspicious. He (George Hamilton) regarded British Committee 'an agency of lies and poisoned sources of information as to what goes on in England concerning India'. And INDIA, to him, 'wilfully and delebrately' fabricated falsehood in England distorting everything that the Secretary of State might say or do'. In his opinion foresaw the power of INDIA a mischief. He wrote to Curzon-the Viceroy of India in 1899 that it was not to receive any favour from the

1. Modern Review Vol. XXVI No. 3 July 1919, The British Committee-Its Re-organisation, p. 30,



British officials, and instead he 'wanted to clip its wings' <sup>1</sup> In 1896 the Congress representatives interviewed Lord Mayo and demanded an appeal to the British public in connection with the Famine outbreak in India. They started a famine relief campaign against the Government. Hamilton reacted sharply to it, and informed the Indian Viceroy Lord Elgin in 1896 "They will not do us much harm, but I do not want them to get the credit of having in any way forced our hand, or made us depart from the policy we have laid down" <sup>2</sup> Lord Kimberley, when he was the Secretary of State for India in 1893, did not want to give the leaders of the British Committee any special importance. He was of the opinion that apart from receiving their letters "any other course would only by giving them a grievance increase their influence and produce Parliamentary interpellations of an inconvenient kind" <sup>3</sup> In 1902 Hamilton had no apprehension of the fact that the Congress representatives in England had attached themselves exclusively to the Radical Party, and that the Indian debates in Parliament were carried on Party lines. Hamilton assured Curzon "So long as we are in majority, this does not matter" <sup>4</sup>

The attitude of Indian Office also discouraged the British Congress workers, and prevented them to undertake wider duties. India Office, to them, was the House of Lords of the Indian situation. "As long as the India Office is the stronghold of officialdom", wrote Wedderburn, "We cannot hope to get the right measures or right men. As a matter of fact, the interests of the Simla clique who garrison the Indian Councils are in direct antagonism to Indian aspirations" <sup>5</sup> The British officials even suggested that the export of INDIA should be stopped and placed on the stopped list of the papers as it published and contained some objectionable articles during the World War I. It was alleged that the man who controlled the paper, belonged to the extremist group, who were obstructing the raising of men and money for the prosecution of War <sup>6</sup>

1 Hamilton to Curzon June 30, 1899 Hamilton Collection, Microfilm reel 2, (Private and Confidential) Vols 1/11/111 LUR MSS Collection

2 Hamilton to Elgin December 31, 1896 Quoted in B. L. Grover's 'A Documentary Study of British Policy towards India' p. 202

3 Ibid, Kimberley to Lansdown January 26 1893 pp. 200-201

4 Hamilton to Curzon November 13 1902 B. L. Grover's book 'Official Attitude Towards Congress', p. 223

5 Wedderburn to Gokhale, October 30 1913 Gokhale Papers File No. 579 Pt. IV

6 Vide Department of Home (Political Deposit) Progs. July and December 1918 No. 10 (Secret), Letter to Under Secretary of State from the Military Intelligence M. I. 5 (a) War Office 52278/M. I. 9 (a)

India office made extensive use of secret service to suppress the Indian agitation in England. An interesting example is given by Lord Fenner Brockway, who was closely connected with the Congress propaganda in England. He experienced it to his great astonishment when he approached Mr. Wedgewood Ben (Later Lord Stansgale) on behalf of a young Indian to plead that the gentleman was not a communist. The Minister admitted it and produced a report of the meeting of the London Branch of the Congress held the previous night. This report of the meeting had been provided to the Minister by a Secret information in the Branch. The proceedings showed that the young Indian had taken an anti-communist line which helped Mr. Ben know all about his suspicion.<sup>1</sup> When the reform proposals of 1919 were being discussed in England, a hostile campaign against the Indian aspirations was being conducted by the British officials. British officials opposed the idea of coming of the Indian deputations to England so that they would not mobilise the public opinion in their favour. The Secretary of State for India informed the Indian Viceroy telegraphically and deprecated the renewal of passports to the members of the various political deputations. He stated: "It is our opinion that the despatch of the deputations to this Country this year should be deprecated in the strongest possible terms, for it is felt by us that this year when Parliament has not as yet been requested to occupy itself with the discussion of these questions, they would be in opportune and of no use."<sup>2</sup> The pretence of Parliament not being in session was a shrewd policy of the British Government. As a matter of fact it was afraid that the deputations could win the favour of the British Nation. This attitude of the officials considerably discouraged the Congress agitation.

### **The waning influence of the old guards**

One of the important causes of the failure of the Congress agitation in England was the waning influence of the old guards of the Congress. Gokhale and Mehta had died in 1915. Leaders like Wacha were old and had lost their influence. This gave opportunity to Tilak and Mrs. Besant to capture the Congress. In England after the death of Hume and Wedderburn and Naoroji, the British Committee under-went a great change. The influence of the old

1. Vide Letter of Fenner Brockway to the Author 10th of January, 1967.

2. Vide Department of Home (Political-A) Progs. October 1918 No. 221 Confidential).

moderates had considerably decreased. The British Committee also came under the influence of the extremists. After the arrival of Tilak in 1918 it was reorganised. As in India so in England, the rift between the moderates and the extremists led to serious political difference and the unity in the Congress ranks broke again. The British Committee, which was hitherto under the influence of the moderates, was suspected. An interesting example of this development is afforded by the indifference of Moti Lal Nehru towards the British Committee. He sent Rs 1000 and 1500 of the Congress sub-committee report to Mr Nevil, a British solicitor, instead of sending it directly to the British Committee for propaganda purpose. This was an indication of the fact that the Congress leaders in India lost faith in the capacity of the British Committee to levy on an active propaganda.

In 1918 the influence of the British Committee and its paper INDIA was waning. Their future prospects were looking dim as there was a split in the Congress between Moderates and Extremists. Lokmanya Tilak, who was in England in 1919, expressed his regret on the activities of the British Committee which failed to present and support the Congress cause in England. On the other hand, Dr G. B. Clark alleged the Indian National Congress that it had broken its own constitutional rules in its resolution regarding the British Committee, and acted upon 'inaccurate and misleading information'. He also complained of the tone and temper of Tilak, Khaparde and other extremist leaders.<sup>1</sup> St Nihal Singh observed "if the split proves to be serious, it will create difficulties for the British Committee in London. There is, in any case, no love lost between the extremist and the Congress party in power."<sup>2</sup> And his observation was true. It ultimately led to a rift between the two groups of the Congress, and it was responsible for the close down of the British Congress Committee, and other agencies connected with it.

These events cooled down the interest and enthusiasm of the Congress workers in England. The Congress in India also underwent a profound change under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. It became disinterested in propaganda abroad. Consequently it

1. *Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting February 26, 1919, Vol November 20, 1909 - December 12, 1919*

2. *Vide Department of Home (Political - Deposit) Progs December, 1918*  
 1/5 (Secret) Excerpts from the enclosed letter sent to Mayo Wallinger by S. N. Sebti for Col. V. G. W. Kell, War Office, 6th September, 1918

decided to discontinue the publication of "India," and terminate the contracts of the staff of the British Committee and stop financial assistance to the Committee.<sup>1</sup> Therefore the movement, embodied in the activities of the British Committee, came to an end.

1. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1920 Resolution XV (b).

THE activities of the Indian National Congress in England during 1815-1920 fall in one pattern. This period covers the beginning and end of the British work of the Congress which had its own distinctive features characterised by an urge of the Congress to seek India's constitutional progress through the cooperation and under the guidance of the British rulers of India. To the Congressmen of the later period who came in conflict with the British, the agitation in England was of little value. To day it might be considered as useless. Lest the British work of the Congress be misjudged or underestimated it should be assessed in the context of the approach of the promoters of the Congress activity in England and the strength and weakness of their thought and work.

In extending their activities to England the early Congress leaders were not actuated by a doctrinaire approach but displayed a sense of political statesmanship. They did not invoke the abstract principles. Nor did they evolve a political philosophy to argue their case. They took their stand on the facts and pleaded the case of India before the British like an advocate or a lawyer. In their efforts to seek India's constitutional progress along the lines of Parliamentary government they claimed equality with the British people on the basis of the British promises contained in the Charter Act of 1833 and Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 and her title of "Empress of India". On the basis of these they considered Indians as the British subject and therefore claimed the same rights of citizenship in India and in England. *As a citizen of the British Empire they claimed the right to transform the bureaucratic administration in India into a representative government of India in the same way as the British had changed their despotic rule into a Parliamentary democracy.* They argued that bureaucrats in India had little sympathy with 'our wants,

our feelings and our aspirations"<sup>1</sup> and at times acted against intentions of the principles of Charter Acts and Queen's Proclamation. It was, therefore, the duty of the leaders of Indian political opinion to represent the case to the ultimate authority which was the British Parliament. The Congress leaders sought to justify their agitation for reforms by comparing it to British method of Parliamentary struggle for reforms.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of the Congress propaganda in England lies in the fact that it was an organised and sustained effort to bring the British into contact with the developing political opinion in India in a loyal and constitutional manner. One of its important effect of some permanent value was that the Congress movement in its early days continued to grow without serious opposition from the British authorities. It was not regarded as harmful.<sup>3</sup> This afforded an opportunity to the early congressmen to consolidate and strengthen the roots of nationalist ideas which enabled the congress to sustain itself in its conflict with the British authorities at a later date.

Another effect of the British work was its ultimate success in securing recognition of its representative character from the British. Although the British in the beginning were not convinced yet they gradually realised that "Congress possessed a hard core of strength and must be dealt with as a negotiating party."<sup>4</sup> The dialogues, between the Congress and the British government after 1930 show the correctness of the situation. The Congress secured full recognition at the British hands before they handed over powers to Indians. The importance of the British work of the Congress in leading India to self-government can also be attributed to the fact that its leaders first realised that Labour Party, not Liberals represented in Britain the true rallying point for the attainment of their desired object. It was the friendship and understanding built with the Labour Party which culminated in securing independence from the British under the regime of Labour Party led by Attlee.

By far the most important achievement of the Congress propaganda in England was the change in the British attitude towards the Indian problem. Emergence and development of the Congress move-

1. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1886, p. 8.

2. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1893 p. 75:

3. Hamilton to Elgin December: 31 1896, Hamilton Collection Microfilm Reel 8.

4. Smith, V.A. The Oxford History of India, p. 764.

ment made the British to realise that Indian problem was not only administrative in nature but it also demanded treatment on a political level. Hence the British emphasis on efficiency as an ideal of administration gave way to a regard for self government. The announcement of 1917 and subsequent constitutional development was to an extent the result of a change in the British public opinion.

The British work of the Congress had its effect of far reaching character in the realm of ideas. Its ultimate effect was the strengthening of the vision of the political future of India on the lines of parliamentary democracy. This vision was repeatedly pressed upon the attention of the British. The vision of the early leaders was realised at a later date and the institution of parliamentary democracy has endured even in independent India. The demand of the Congress leaders for the same form of administration which the British had in England also implies the conception of a principle which at a later date involved the transformation of the Empire into the Commonwealth of Nations.

The Congress movement in England conducted with enthusiasm had some weaknesses. The assumption of its leaders that their direct appeal to the British would seek the redress of their grievances was not correct. They placed too much reliance on the British nation and the machinery it has set up to govern India was unrealistic. They failed to understand that the British officials in India were carrying out the instructions of the ruling authority whose attitude was marked with hesitancy and caution. Neither the Conservatives as Salisbury or Curzon nor Liberals as Kimberley or Morley had any positive belief in the desirability of gradually introducing Parliamentary democracy in India. In ultimate effect the Curzon School of Thought always prevailed in decisions regarding India.

The promoters of the Congress movement in England looked up on English leaders and statesmen as their guides and accepted their statements as gospels. But political leaders in England did not show any inclination to give any such guidance. There was also no sound logic in claiming equality on the ground of their being British subject. No ruling nation parts with its power nor does it easily confer on the ruled its own rights and privileges. In fact it was the wrong conviction of the Indian leaders that India must expect as much justice from England as the "Lamb in the fable got from wolf". The greatest weakness of the thought of the early Congress leaders was their moral defence of British rule. It made them incapable of ever asserting the right of complete national independence.

Their emphasis on the success of the Congress deputation to England was self-estimated. These deputations hardly succeeded in arousing any considerable interest of the British. The British, in fact, were interested in their imperial and international position. They could, therefore, hardly pay a serious attention to India. It was a wrong conviction of the leaders that liberals would come to their help after coming in power. But as the facts indicate the liberals were only liberals in name. They did not hesitate to make a common cause with the conservatives on Indian issues. "To both the parties" observed a leading Indian, "India has a value only as the pivot of the British Empire as the brightest jewel in the British diadem."<sup>1</sup>

The promoters of the Congress movement were the moderate leaders. They were under the influence of Western ideas and wanted to impart those ideas to India. Their policy did not encourage tendency of self-assertion and self-help. The hopes, which they had from the British, dwindled away when Lord Morley disappointed them by rejecting their demands. Morley's action aroused such a sense of disappointment that a contemporary Indian newspaper, while referring to the defeat of the Liberal Party at the Manchester bye election in 1908 observed: "we have nothing to do with the defeat of this or that party. The misdeeds of Liberal Morley are even now causing our hopes to ache."<sup>2</sup> The Rowlatt Act, the Punjab wrongs and the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy indicated the hollowness of the moderate's policy to appeal to the British sense of justice and Liberalism. This gave rise to a new spirit and a determination among Indians to assert themselves and impress the British with the impossibility of ignoring their claims.<sup>3</sup> A feeling became widely prevalent that the Congress under the moderate leadership failed to get justice at the hands of British because it lacked the necessary strength which alone could make the ruling authority to part with its powers. This feeling was organised by Mahatma Gandhi into a more progressive method of non-violent, non-cooperation agitation for the redresses of Indian grievances. Consequently the movement embodied in the British Committee of the Congress came to an end.

1. R. G. Pradhan "Indian Affairs in England" vide Indian Review Vol. VIII No 1, January 1907, p. 736.

2. Confidential Report on the Native Newspapers of Bengal PURBA BENGAL 6 May, 1908.

3. India in 1919, p. 28.



If the Congress movement in England failed on account of its own weaknesses, it was also due to the British policy that it did not succeed. The British response to the growing political aspirations lacked clarity of thought and direction, and was marked by hesitancy and suspicion. For long the British avoided to define in clear terms their policy towards India's political advancement. They had become conscious of the developing political problem in India which called for a new approach. But they refused to face the facts and continued to pursue their old policy of governing India by imperial considerations. A modest Congress of the early years of the 20th century could have been easily satisfied by a liberal approach of the British, but their cold and stiff attitude towards Indian aspirations led the Congress to a major conflict with the British. Consequently the British work of the Congress sunk into insignificance. It lost all its vitality and glamour in the face of the rising spirit of non cooperation movement under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. With the use of this spirit a new era of Indian statesmanship and a new and distinctive phase of the Congress began.



## APPENDIX 1

### (RELEVANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE BRITISH COMMITTEE) UNPUBLISHED

#### (A) Excerpts from the Letter of Allan Hume for the Establishment of the British Congress Committee

"Of course the stronger and better our Board of Directors, the better, but for God's sake get a Board of some kind into existence I, as General Secretary, empower you to do the needful "

*Simla, June 5, 1889*

• • •

'Now as to your committee lest it seems excellent and exhaustive But this committee is one thing—a thing, I altogether approve and shall be delighted to see established and the Committee We so urgently want at the moment—another and quite a different thing You may be called the Indian Reform Committee the one I want the India Agency Committee The first may be as large and strong as you can make it The second, which may later become a sub-Committee of the former must be small and composed entirely of effectives Its whole object being to boss the Agency, guide its policy, and give assurance to our contributors so that their money is being properly spent in England '

*Simla, June 7, 1889,*

• • •

#### (B) Resolutions Passed to form A Committee

- (i) "That in accordance with the request of the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, the under signed\* together with Mr Cane M P agree to act as a provisional committee to direct the work of the Congress agency in England and to sanction and audit its expenditure, with power to add its number."

(iv) • CONGRESS IN ENGLAND

- (ii) 'That Mr. Digby C.I.E. be invited to act as Secretary of the Committee.'
- (iii) 'That the Indian National Congress should be asked to confirm these proceedings and to furnish the Committee from time to time with instructions as to the work they wish done in England.'
- (iv) 'That the work of the Committee be, ordinarily be done by circulation of matters requiring attention and that meetings should be held from time to time, as were found to be necessary.'

\*The undersigned included Mc Laren, Dadabhai Naoroji and William Wedderburn.

Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee July 27, 1889. Vol. June 20, 1889 to October 2, 1890.

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COMPOSITION OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE OF  
THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

(C) English Committee in 1890

Sir William Wedderburn—Chairman	Mc Laren M.P.
W.S. Caine M.P.	Dadabhai Naoroji
J.E. Ellis M.P.	George Yulu
W.S. Bright	William Digby—Secretary

Office : 25, Craven Street Charing Cross, London

Vide "India" Vol. I, No. I, p. 1.

(D) Members of the British Committee in 1900

W. Wedderburn M.P.	J.M. Parikh
G.B. Clark M.P.	G.P. Pillai
A.O. Hume C.B.	J. Herbert Roberts M.P.
B.B. Joshi	C.E. Schwann M.P.
J. Seymour Keay	Robinson Southar M.P.
Sarat Mullick	Nilkant B. Wagle
Dadabhai Naoroji	Alfred Webb
	W. Martin Wood

Vide INDIA Vol. XIV, July 27, 1900 p. 55.

**(E) Constitution of the British Committee adopted finally in 1919**

- (1) That the name of the committee shall be the British Committee of the Indian National Congress
- (2) That the object of the Committee shall be to act as the Executive in the United Kingdom of the Indian National Congress
- (3) That the General Committee shall consist of an unlimited number of members, with power to add to their number who accepts the objects as defined in Article one of the Congress Constitution and the Resolutions passed by the Congress
- (4) That there shall be elected annually an executive Committee, of not more than 12 members of the General Committee who shall meet as often as they consider desirable and who shall have the powers of the General Committee between its meetings
- (5) That the Executive Committee shall elect a Chairman, and Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Hon Secretary
- (6) That the President and Ex-Presidents of the Congress, who are not in the Government service and still co operate with the Congress, and all delegates sent by the Congress to this country shall be Ex-officio members of the Executive Committee while in England
- (7) That the expenses of the Committee shall be defrayed by Annual Grants from the Indian National Congress

Minutes of the British Congress Committee July 25, 1919 p 281

**(F) The British Congress Committee in 1919**

Under the new constitution adopted in 1919, the British Committee was reorganised as under

Dr G.B Clark—Chairman

Dr H.V Rutherford—Vice Chairman

Mr J M Parikh—Hon Secretary & Treasurer

Members of the Executive Committee

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Lord Clwyd       | 4 Dr G B Clark      |
| 2 Mr Dalgado        | 5 Mr J M Parikh     |
| 3 Mr Holford Knight | 6 Dr H V Rutherford |

Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee Meeting, December 10, 1919 Volume, November 30, 1909—August 1, 1919

(vi) . ● CONGRESS IN ENGLAND

Mr. Ben Spoor M.P., Col. J. C. Wedgewood M. P.  
Mr. Neil Maclean M.P., Mr. Dip Narayan Singh,  
Mr. B. Dube, George Lansbury were elected as members of  
the Committee later on.

Minutes of the British Congress Committee  
Meeting August 29, 1919.  
(Vol. November 30, 1909—August 1, 1919)

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(G) Discontinuance of the English Work of Congress

The following cablegram was considered :

BRITISH COMMITTEE DISSOLVED CEASE PUBLICA-  
TION INDIA IMMEDIATELY ALL STAFF ENGAGE-  
MENT TERMINATE ON OUR RETURN REACH  
LONDON Jan. 24, Spoor Knight.

- (2). It was decided to incur no new commitments involving expenditure by the committee and to inform the Directors of the India Newspaper Company that no grants would be made for issue after the next number of India.
- (3) It was decided to give the staff notice that appointments would be terminated on the return of Messrs Spoor & Knight.

Minute of the meeting January 11, 1921, p. 74

● ● ●

.....it was decided unanimously to dissolve the Committee and cease publishing "India"—no propaganda would be undertaken by the Congress to disseminate correct information of the Congress activities so as to counteract any mis-statements made in the English Press or on the public platform.

Minutes of the meeting January 25, 1921, p. 74.  
(Volume January 5, 1920 to November 11, 1921)

- (H) The British Committee in the Constitution of the Congress 1938 1920

## CONSTITUTION OF THE CONGRESS, 1908

### *Article IV*

The Indian National Congress Organisation will consist of

- (a) The Indian National Congress ,
- (b) The Provincial Congress Committees
- (c) District Congress Committees ,
- (d) Sub Divisional or Taluka Congress Committees ,
- (e) Political Associations or Public Bodies recognised as Electorates in accordance with clause (3) of Article XX
- (f) The All India Congress Committee ,
- (g) *The British Committee of the Congress* , and
- (h) Bodies formed or organised periodically by a Provincial Congress Committee such as provincial conference or the Reception Committee of the Congress

### *Article V*

No person shall be eligible to be a member of any of the Provincial or District or other Congress Committees mentioned in clauses (b), (c), (d) and (h) of Article IV unless he has attained the age of twentyone and expresses in writing his acceptance of the objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this constitution and his willingness to abide by this constitution by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended

*Notes* Significantly enough section (g) i.e. British Committee was not mentioned in this Article

## ELECTORATES AND DELEGATES

### *Article XX*

The right of electing Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall vest exclusively in (1) *the British Committee of the Congress* (2) Provincial or District or other Congress Committee (3) Such Political Associations of more than three years' standing as may be recognised in that behalf by the Provincial Congress Committee

## SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

## Article XXIV

The Subjects Committee to be appointed at each session of the Congress to settle its programme of business to be transacted shall consist of not more than 15 representatives of Madras 15, Bombay 20, Bengal 15, U.P., 13, Punjab 7, C.P., 5, Bihar 5, Berar 2, Burma 5, *British Committee of the Congress* and additional 10 representatives of the Province in which Congress is held.

THE BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS

### Article XXVIII

The Reception Committee of the Province in which the Congress is held shall remit to the British Committee of the Congress; through the General Secretaries of the Congress, half the amount of the fees received by it from Delegates.

CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL  
CONGRESS—1920  
COMPONENT PARTS OF THE CONGRESS

Article III includes various Committees mentioned in the Constitution of 1908. But there is no mention of British Committee in any of the sections of this Article. Section (f) runs as : Such other Committees outside India as may from time to time be recognised by the Congress in this behalf.

**(I) Financial Position of the British Congress Committee and the Journal "India"**

Letter addressed by William Wedderburn—Chairman of the Committee to the Joint General Secretary of the Indian National Congress on June 24, 1903.

The British Committee have, at successive meetings, considered their financial position in all its bearings; and have come to the conclusion that the only satisfactory way in which a Congress agency can be maintained in this country, is by a cash payment made at the commencement of the year. It is

for the congress to decide how much they desire to expend upon the propaganda here, and whether they send in us we will utilise to the best of our ability. But at the close of this year we shall be without any congress funds in our hands, and we are not prepared to advance the money necessary to carry on the work.

2. It is neither necessary nor desirable to refer in detail to the difficulties of the past years. But it may be stated generally that, while recognising the zeal and self-sacrifice of so many Congress supporters, we do not think that the present arrangements should be continued. Our time and energies are exhausted in trying to obtain in payment of the amounts voted and guaranteed, while our insistence in this matter leads to strained relations with those with whom we desire to be on the most cordial terms. Such a condition of things cause damage to the National cause, and our remedy seems to be to put the business upon the cash basis, cutting our coat according to our cloth.

3. Hitherto the journal "INDIA" has been an integral part of our Congress propaganda, and we are firmly of opinion that without an organ in the Press, no cause can be advocated in this country with any hope of success. At the same time considerable misapprehension appears to have arisen in India with regard to the working of this Journal, which is regarded by some as a heavy burden on the Congress. In order to remove any such misapprehensions we propose to separate the accounts of "INDIA" from those of the British Committee, and to relieve the Congress of the financial responsibility which it has hitherto undertaken with regard to the maintenance of 'India'. INDIA will depend solely upon its receipts as a commercial undertaking and it can only continue to issue if the number of subscribers is sufficient to cover the cost.

4. Such being the case, any vote passed next christmas by the Congress will only have reference to the maintenance of the British Committee as the Congress agency in this country. And before stating a proposal in this respect, I am desired by the Committee to make a special request that no sum may be voted which is not in hand ready for telegraphic remittance. Nothing has done this committee more harm than the practice of the Congress to vote a large sum e.g. Rs 60,600



which is not paid. It gives the idea that the Committee have resources which they do not possess, and leads to the expectations of results which might be attained if these sums were readily paid.

5. It is understood that the Congress will have concluded its sittings at Madras by 30th of December next. The Committee, therefore, propose to hold a meeting on the following day, that is the 31st December next, in order to receive the decision of the Congress on the financial question, and to take action upon it. The continuation or dissolution of the Congress agency in this country will depend upon the amount remitted by telegraph on 30th for the maintenance of the Committee during the year 1904. The decision of the Congress will be held to be expressed as follows :—

(1) If £1000 is remitted, the Committee is to be continued as at present with additional propaganda by an organised series of lectures and public meetings.

(2) If £700 is remitted, the Committee is to be continued as at present.

(3) If less than £700 is remitted, we must hold that the Congress has decided that the Committee shall be continued on reduced scale, or dissolved altogether.

(4) You will doubtless communicate with the various Congress circle and we shall be glad to learn, as soon as possible, the view taken by them regarding the proposed agreement.

*Yours faithfully.*

84 & 85 Chambers S.W.  
June 24, 1903.

Sd/- W. WEDDERBURN  
Chairman.

## J) Memo for the Consideration of the Committee

(circulated among the members of the Committee)

Wedderburn quoted the letter of Mr Hume dated 31 December 1891 in which he reported his meeting with the members of the standing committee and the result of their deliberations, with regard to the *financial position*, and the *accounts* submitted to them from our office

2 It appears that 16,700 have been actually collected for the expenses of the *British committee* in 1891, while Rs 13,300 more, are, he believes, assured Thus 30,000 will be received out of Rs 37,000 promised as the Congress contribution For next year small sums have been arranged for but under still more definite agreement, as to times of payments. Although Rs 40,000 have been voted as usual by the Congress for the *British Committee* in 1892, it appears that only 30,000 will really be sent There will also be £200 from Mr Bonnerjee, with anything that may be Contributed in England

3 There has been terrible difficulty in raising the money Also in the future, it having been determined to continue the Congress permanently, the difficulties will probably increase The standing committees have, therefore, gone very earnestly into all the details of expenditure, and they are most urgent that the strictest economy should be exercised in England

Minutes of the British Congress Committee Jan 26, 1892  
(Vol January 25, 1891 to Dec 19 18 3)

• • •

(K) A letter of W Douglas Hall—the Secretary of the British Congress Committee to Gokhale asking him to read the letter of William Wedderburn—the Chairman of the Committee dated July 15, 1912

• • •

Dear.....

On the 19th October 1900 joint letter was addressed to the Indian National Congress by Mr Hume, Mr Dadabhai, and myself regarding prospects of the Indian Party of Congress, nothing the position of the work (a) in India, and (b) in England In this

joint letter, generally called the 'Manifesto', it was pointed out (a) that in India the main object had been to obtain solidarity of public opinion, founded upon the widest experience and the wisest counsels available; and it was claimed that this part of the work was in great measure accomplished, the resolution of the Congress upon all the leading questions of the day being practically accepted as expressing independent public opinion throughout India. As regards (b) the work in England, the object of the British Committee was to place the Indian view of Indian affairs, as matured in the Congress, before the British public, by means of the Parliament, the Press and the Platform. In all these directions persistent work had been carried on: in the House of Commons an Indian Parliamentary Committee was formed, including about 120 members, pledged to give attention to Indian affairs, and to see justice done; as regards the Press "India" was established as a first-class weekly journal, forming a storehouse of facts and arguments for journalists and speakers throughout the country, and keeping before the British Public the Indian view of current events; while the Platform was utilised by Indian and British speakers, explaining to sympathetic audience the needs of India, and the means by which she may be made prosperous and contended. The "Manifesto" concluded with an urgent appeal to the Congress leaders to make the Congress a real power in the state of hard earnest work, by good feeling, and by a united purpose; "on the other hand, if necessary sacrifice and self-denial are not exercised, if from want of courage and constantly the people allow this constitutional effect to lapse, the work of years will be thrown away, and a danger will arise that the physical sufferings of the masses, may lead to counsels of despair."

Such was 12 years ago the summary of the past work and future prospects put on record by three of the oldest friends of the Congress movement. Since then time has brought a great change, both as to person and conditions. Mr Hume, alas, lies stricken by sickness, worn out atleast by the labour of a strenuous life; and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the aged patriarch of Indian aspirations, has retired from England to the spend his days among his own people. The loss to the British Committee of these two veterans materially alters the position in England. Those who are now Congress leaders were their dis-

ciples in the great movement initiated 30 years ago for the regeneration and enfranchisement of the Indian people, and they have been willing and accustomed implicitly to accept their guidance. There is now no one who can fill their place of these people, whose confidence they had won by long years of labour and devotion. It is fortunate that this change has occurred at a time when in England has been accomplished and when Lord Morley's reforms have given to Indians an affective influence in Indian administration. The centre of gravity has now shifted and India must now directly take the initiative in the measures for her future progress. This initiative work, which will be of an arduous kind, must be done in the referred Legislative Councils, while the political education of the people in India is carried on by the Indian National Congress, the Provincial conferences, and affiliated institution, working all the years round. The special duty of the organization in England will be to give support to the measures thus initiated, and when necessary, to press an appeal to Parliament and British Public opinion.

It may thus be said that the future of their country is now largely in the hands of the Indians themselves. But it would be a most fatal mistake to suppose that the future of India would be safe unless she provides for a vigilant and effective agency in this country, for here is the seat of power. Indian reformers must be aware how strong are the interests opposed to self government in India, they know how bitterly in certain quarters Lord Morley's reforms have been resented, and how the Government has been attacked on account of the gracious announcements made at Delhi by the King Emperor. Let them consider what their position would be if the present Government went out of office and if they were unrepresented in this country. Under an administration favourable to aggression abroad and coercion at home. But even without such a disaster, I am convinced that work in India, however good, will not bear proper fruit unless linked with educational activity in England.

The practical question now is How is the organization in London to be maintained. In the annual report which the British Committee supplies to the Congress, every penny of reception and disbursements is set forth, and the Congress

leaders, who have visited England, know that a rigid, even parsimonious economy has been exercised, at during the last 8 years the normal expenditure (which is about per annum for the office establishment, and for the journal "India" has exceeded the normal income by an average of about..... This deficit has been met from time to time by special efforts. But inspite of these efforts, and the appeal made at the Allahabad Congress of 1910 to provide a sufficiently for the propaganda work for the following 3 years the prospect is that the present year 1912, will end with a deficit of about £800, about being £300 on account of the office establishment, and £500 on account of the journal "India".

For next year, with diminished fee from Congress Delegates and dwindling subscribers to "India", the prospect is still less hopeful. As the survivor in the British" Committee of the three veterans, who signed the "Manifesto of 1900, I therefore make an appeal in the interest of the vast population of India, to their well-to-do fellow countrymen, to provide the funds necessary to safeguard the advance already achieved; and to press forward the campaign against the destitution, the disease, and the ignorance of the suffering masses. Indian philanthropists have always been named for their generous charity. Will they turn a deaf ear to this appeal? If among the wealthy men and women in the great commercial centres of India, 100 friends of humanity can be found willing to give the modest sum of Rs. 100 yearly, the problem will be solved. This letter is directed to those who are believed to be willing and able to help, if the real need is made clear. Will you, Dear Sir, give a favourable response to this personal appeal, which is the last I shall make to my Indian friends, and return to me signed the enclosed slip, when will secure the regular payment of your kind contribution.

I would at the same time ask you to favour me with your opinion as to the way in which the services of the organisation in England can best be utilised? Under the altered condition noted at the commencement of this letter it appears to me that there may, now with advantage, be a modification of the policy represented by journal "India". While the battle was still to be won, the militant attitude was unfavourable, and the vigorous campaign of our accomplished Editor, Mr. Cotton for the

redress of grievances, was a necessity of the situation. Now, however, the case is different. Local grievances, can now be dealt with by the representation of the people in the Legislative Councils, and the object of 'India' will be the support measures initiated in India, by collecting facts and figures drawn from Europe and America, by obtaining articles by experts on burning questions, affecting India and generally by placing before the British public, week by week, the proceedings of the councils and of progressive organization, with special reference to the representatives of independent public opinion in India. The journal may, thus, be made a powerful influence of conciliation and co operation among all classes desiring the welfare of India.

Gokhale Papers File No 579 Part IV

(L) Memorandum on the Indian Claim for an Advance Towards Self-government within the British Empire

*A Parliamentary Conference*

'As regards principle, there seems to be no material difference of opinion in England and in India. It is universally acknowledged that by her attitude in this world crisis, India has proved her fitness for increased participation in the management of her own affairs. The question now is one of degree and expediency. How far can self government be granted with benefit to India, and safety for the Empire? It is evident that the practical difference in reaching a decision on these points are great, requiring ripe experience of constitutional practices, combined with calm judgement, and anxious consideration of Indian requirements. How are these conditions to be secured? It appears that

- (i) The constitutional experience must be sought in England, while,
- (ii) The knowledge of Indian requirements must come from India. Fortunately, as regards both of these conditions, circumstances are exceptionally favourable at the present time.

Because accredited Indian leaders, chosen by the great Indian communities, are prepared to come to England, in order to set forth the aspirations of United India.

Accordingly, Parliamentary friends have suggested that the Government should, without delay appoint a Small Committee, selected from both Houses of Parliament, to consider the various reform schemes put forward, and report their recommendations to the Government; and further that the Government should at the same time, invite the "All India Joint Committee" to send delegates to England; in order to set forth their views, and confer with this Committee. The notable success which has attended the action of the Government in inviting Indian representatives to the Imperial War Conference seems to promise good results if this proposal is adopted.

Meredith, Gloucester

WEDDERBURN

13 May, 1917.

Vide Minutes of the British Congress Committee  
Vol. November 30, 1909 to December 10, 1919.

(M)

IMPERIAL HOTEL  
RUSSELL SQUARE. W.C. 1  
6th February, 1918.

My dear (?)

"Upon the Prime Minister's declaration regarding Self-determination I sought an interview with him and received the enclosed letter from Mr. P.H. Ker, Private Secretary. Thereupon I saw Mr. Kerr (on Feb. 1). The interview lasted for nearly two hours. We discussed various aspects of Home Rule, and some objections and difficulties. In the course of our conversation he assured me that cabinet decided to give India the fullest possible measure of Home Rule without delay. Mr. Montagu's mission is designed to enable him, as a politician, to discover what is the largest measure now possible after taking *some risk*. He has *cartblanche*. This is exceedingly gratifying. I wonder if this is realised in India. It should be made known throughout the length and breadth of our beloved motherland. At last the dawn of a glorious day illumines the firmament. The question is reduced to the narrow compass of our capacity of representative government. There can be little doubt of our fitness."

A letter draft—Baptista to Tilak  
Department of Home (Political—B) (Print)  
Proceedings May 1918, No. 161, (Secret)

(N)

*P H KERR's Enclosure*

10, Downing Street  
Whitehall, S W 1  
5th Feb 1918

Dear Mr Baptista,

Many thanks for your letter of Feb 4th, and for the draft of a letter to Mr Tilak which it enclosed. I should be much obliged if you would make it clear to Mr Tilak and to others to whom you may write, that no public use must be made of any account of our conversation which you may send him. The interview was arranged at your own suggestion primarily in order that I might be able to communicate your views on various matters connected with India to the Prime Minister. It was a purely private meeting and was not intended to bear any formal or public character, or to result in a public statement of any kind.

Further, I am afraid that the *draft letter* in its present form would convey an incorrect impression of the views which I expressed. As it is of the utmost importance that there should be no misunderstanding about these matters, I have much to record a summary of the substance of our conversation as I recollect it.

Hoping to see you again before you return to India

Yours sincerely

Sd P H. KERR

Joseph Baptista Esq  
Imperial Hotel,  
Russell Square



(O) Suggested Congress in London

'A circular from the Madras Mahajan Sabha was read containing the suggestion that a meeting of the Indian National Congress should be held in London in July next. The matter was further discussed, and the following telegram was sent to the Bombay Presidency Association :

"POLITIKOS BOMBAY"

July Congress in London impossible  
notify all committees. Wedderburn

Minutes of the British Committee June 2, 1897.

## APPENDIX II

### (A) The Journal INDIA Its Editors

- (1) William Digby — 1890 1892, closely connected with Indian affairs, Journalist, Editor Madras Times 1877 79 Returned to England, Secretary, National Liberal Club, Indian Political Agency and other Committees, wrote many books on India, well known supporter of Congress
- (2) Morse Stephense—Jan 1893—Sept 1893 He was Lecturer in Indian History at Cambridge University
- (3) Gordon Hewart—1893—1905 (Lord Chief Justice in 1919)
- (4) Professor Muirhead—1905—1906
- (5) H E A Cotton—1906—1919, well known advocate of Indian cause, Family served India for five generations Entered Indian Civil Service 1867, retired in 1902, Member, House of Commons, 1905, President of the Congress 1904 wrote books on India
- (6) H S L Polak —1919—1920 well known associate of Gandhiji in South Africa, supporter of the Congress

But he was relieved soon For sometime the post of editorship remained vacant During this period Miss Hellen Norman acted as editor temporarily N C Kelkar and Said Hussain acted as Assistant Editors

Between 1919—1920 S K Ratelife—biographer of Sir William Wedderburn and Fenner (now Lord) Brockway associated themselves with untiring efforts and self sacrifice in carrying on the weekly edition of the noted journal

### (B) A Sonnet published in the First Issue of India Journal

Britons ! to your profession now be true '  
If selflessly Ye seek my lasting good  
Stand fast to me ' For rightly understood  
My cause and yours in sooth are same though far  
Seen willing yet to realise this view  
In deeds, be speaking that calm mental mood

Which sees in mine and England's sisterhood  
My right to claim from her a sister's due  
Blest heirs of Freedom ! act as free men should !  
Some of her blessings on my sons bestow  
And thus secure my endless gratitude  
And one more wreath of glory for your brow !  
O', spread those blessings through this Empire wide,  
And let my sons march onward by your side !

*RAM SARMA*

INDIA—a journal for the discussion of Indian Affairs February 1890, No. 1,  
Vol. I, p. 1.

•                      •                      •

(C) Receipt of the Subscription to "INDIA"

*INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS*

377

C Villa

Received from.....  
the sum of Rupees.....being the amount of  
his subscription to "India" for 1901.

Rs.....

*SECRETARY*

**MEMO**

As the subscription of India is strictly in advance, the under-  
signed requests the favour of payment on the presentation of  
the Bill.

*D. E. WACHA*

**(D) A Letter addressed to the Editor of INDIA Journal by the Congress Delegates in 1914**

"Sir, We, the delegates of the Indian National Congress were present in the House of Lords on Tuesday last June 30 on the occasion of the debate on the second reading of the Council of India Bill. We deeply regret that a motion was made for the rejection of the Bill. The proposed measure embodies three important principles, namely

- 1 Statutory provision for including in the Council at least two Indian members
- 2 Selection by the Secretary of State of those Indian members from a list to be chosen by the non official members of the different Legislative Councils of India and
- 3 Increasing the powers in certain matters of the Secretary of State

It may be said that (i) and (ii) represent the minimum of concessions made to India public opinion, which insists on one-third of the members of the Councils being Indians and elected by only the elected members of the Indian Legislative Councils. If even the maximum concessions provided in the Bill is not accepted by the House of Lords, we consider that reference of the Bill to a select Committee will be useless.

As regards (3) increasing the power of the Secretary of State, we see no objection to this point being considered by a Select Committee. The rejection of the Bill will create a very unfortunate impression in our country, and will greatly weaken, if not paralyse, the constitutional party in India.

84, Palace Chambers,  
Westminster S W  
July 2, 1914

- (i) Bhupendra Nath Basu
- (ii) M. A. Jinnah
- (iii) Lajpat Rai
- (iv) M. N. Samarath
- (v) B. N. Sarma
- (vi) S. Sinha

(E) A Joint Letter to the Members of the Congress in India for the Finances for the Journal "India"

BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE  
INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

84 & 85, Palace Chambers  
Westminster, London, S.W.

Dear friends,

We are sorry to be compelled to draw your attention once more to the great delay that you, in India, allow to occur in paying your subscriptions for "India". It is almost incredible; but it is voted annually by the Congress for the purpose of the British Committee (and of which the major portion INDIA would pay up their subscriptions), only Rs. 16,205 have as yet been received on account of 1898 and only Rs. 2,064 on account of the current year, now in its last quarter.

If you could only fully realise the inconvenience, trouble, and anxiety, which these delatory habits entail upon those in England who are ceaselessly labouring in your cause—fighting a most difficult and uphill battle for justice and for you, in the face too of no little obloquy—we believe that you would not find it in your hearts to lay this additional and grievous burden on these, your old and faithful friends and champions.

But independent of the unnecessary difficulties which you thus condemn us to encounter, we find that, in consequence of these inordinate delays, the time is fast approaching, when, unless you and the rest of our Congressmen make up their minds to remit promptly, at any rate the balances of the sums voted at the two last Congresses, the whole work of the Committee here must come to an end.

We cannot believe that you and your bretheren generally, will ever timely acquiece in such a disasterous termination of all our labours in the cause of India and her people, and we, therefore, confidently except that on the receipt of this our reminder, you will atonce remit to us any money you have in hand, and spee-

dily realising all outstandings, go to the coming Congress prepared to patch up all balances there

We remain  
Ever Yours, very sincerely

October 13, 1899

Sd. A. O. Hume  
Sd. W. Wedderburn

An Enclosure to the letter of Curzon to Hamilton  
December 28, 1899, Hamilton Collection Microfilm Reel 8

(F)

Telegraphic  
Address  
INCAS-PARI-London

BRITISH COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS  
84 & 85, Palace Chambers  
Westminster London, S.W.

Dear Sir William,

I have read Mr. Wacha's letter, and Mr. Cotton shall see at the first opportunity.

I am afraid the "present generation" does not always set a very brilliant example to the rising generation. Anything less inspiring than the conduct of some of the Congress leaders, over the latest guarantee cannot will be imagined.

It was, you will remember, at Mr. Gokhale's expressed wish that you asked that we might, in emergency draw upon the capital of the Bombay surplus. He could not have known, any more than we did, that the terms of the Trust permitted the remittance of interest only so long as you were Chairman of the Committee. We shall have the advantage of Mr. Gokhale's presence here in this spring. We went into matters very fully last summer, and not thought we might manage for some time. It is probable that the commercial crisis in Bombay may affect us to some extent, but certain moneys are pretty certain to come from the Congress, besides subscriptions to 'India', and we have

in the last emergency the capital of INDIA, and the Benefit Fund. With over 20 years experience I feel that there is now no one here besides you goodself who can influence funds from India, or who is greatly concerned about the future of this establishment.

I sincerely trust Mr. Gokhale is not over-taxing his strength and energies. We have great need of his guidance and help. I read your letter in the D. News with pleasure, and wish the matter were settled. A real trouble is the presence in the Transvaal and O.F.S. of a considerable number of the old Boers who do not care what trouble there may be in India. They have not forgotten or forgiven the conquest of their country, and have no love for the British Empire, and they hate man of the type of Gen. Botha for their learnings towards Imperialism or otherwise.

Yours sincerely

Dec. 8, 1913

W. DOUGLAS HALL

Douglas Hall to William Wedderburn Gokhale Papers File No. 579 Pt. IV.

**(G) A short note on the Contributions from India for the Journal "INDIA"**

Among the various sources of the income for the noted paper "India"—an official organ of the British Congress Committee, contribution from India constituted an important source. Apart from the amount which the Indian National Congress voted annually for the British Committee and a portion of which was spent on the Journal, the journal derived its income from the sale proceeds in India. It was circulated free of cost to the members of Parliament and other eminent persons in England. But it was sold at a price of Rs. 8/- annually in India inclusive of postage etc.<sup>1</sup> Thus the journal received financial support through subscribers and share holders in India. Of the 6,000 copies published in England in 1899 were subscribed in a large number in India. Bengal was the greatest to help the paper

<sup>1</sup>D. E. Wacha to Wedderburn October 15, 1901 Gokhale Papers (Wacha letters) File No. 569, Pt. III.

financially. In 1897, 1500 copies were allotted to this province, and on the list of the subscribers were the names of all the leading Zamindars<sup>2</sup>. It was thought that INDIA could be made self paying if 4,000 of its copies were consumed and subscribed in India<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly the annual Congress of 1901 resolved at its Calcutta session to allocate 1,500 copies to Bengal, 700 to Madras, 200 to N.W. Provinces, 50 to Oudh, 100 to Punjab, 450 to Berar and Central Provinces, and 1,000 copies to Bombay. It was also resolved to collect the money to be paid in advance in two half-yearly instalments<sup>4</sup>. Besides applications for shares of "India Ltd" were also sent to India. In 1904, four hundred forms of the shares were filled up, signed and a draft of £400 was sent to the Chairman of the British Committee.<sup>5</sup>

It was suggested that the two-penny paper could be distributed free of cost regularly, if the Indian National Congress supplied the money sufficiently and promptly, which meant practically that whole of the funds would have to be obtained from the people of India.<sup>6</sup> But this never came into action due to the unco-operative and unsympathetic attitude of the Congress in India. In 1910 W. Douglas Hall—the Secretary of the British Committee that time submitted a note to Gokhale telling him the financial position of the journal, and urged to 'pay the money regularly, sufficiently and promptly' in order to run the journal smoothly. He also gave an estimate, if it was to be continued in its various forms.

12 P P Weekly (as then)	52 issues	about	£950
12 P P Fortnightly	26 issues	"	£670
8 P P Weekly	52 issues	"	£850
8 P P Fortnightly	26 issues	"	£620
24 P P Monthly	12 issues	"	£530 <sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Curzon to Hamilton, August 2, 1899 Hamilton Collection (Private correspondence) Microfilm Reel 8 EUR MSS Collection

<sup>3</sup>Gokhale Papers (Wacha letters) October 15, 1901

<sup>4</sup>Vide Deptt of Home (Pub —A) Progs 55 58 of April, 1902, 17th Session of the I N C Calcutta 1901 Resolution II (a)

<sup>5</sup>Gokhale to Wedderburn, April 7, 1904, Gokhale Papers File No 203, Pt I

<sup>6</sup>Douglas Hall to Gokhale undated 1910, Gokhale Papers File No 579, Pt. III.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



Before the World War I broke out, the number of subscribers decreased down. When the hostilities commenced the cost of production, printing and other expenses increased, "India" began to entail a heavy loss. The cost of paper alone rose from 2d to 1.2d per 1.6. In 1917, the Committee undertook to meet the deficit, yet another deficit came up in 1918. It was estimated from £600 to £700. Even after a contribution of £500 made by the Congress in India, the deficit figured at £926.3—a result partly due to the heavy rise and prices of paper, printing etc. owing to the war.<sup>8</sup> In 1919, the loss did not exceed to £700—The obligation was assured by the Committee for a definite period and ended in June 1919. Meanwhile the managers of the paper received several big and small donations from Britain to meet the expenses.<sup>9</sup> Yet for want of adequate funds for the journal, the political agitation through press suffered a lot.

<sup>8</sup>Vide Modern Review Vol. XXV, No. 5, May 1919. p. 530.

<sup>9</sup>Letter of Lord Fenner Brockway to the author Dec. 14, 1966.

## APPENDIX III

### RESOLUTIONS OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS RELATING TO ITS BRITISH WORK (1889—1920)

#### Appointment of the British Committee

"That this Congress does, hereby, confirm the appointment of Sir William Wedderburn Bart and Messrs W S Caine, M P, W S, Bright, Mac Laren, M P, J W Ellis M P, Dadabhai Naoroji and George Yulu (with power to add to their number) to guide and control the expenditure of the National Congress Agency in England, and does further tender its sincere thanks to these gentlemen, and to Mr. W Digby, C I E, the Secretary, for the services, they are rendering to India "

(Resolution XIII d Bombay 1889)

#### Deputation to England

' That this Congress does formally appoint Mr George Yulu, Mr A O Hume, Mr Adam, Mr Eardley Norton Mr J E Howard, Mr Pheroz Shah Mehta, Mr Surendra Nath Banerjea, Mr Mono Mohan Ghose, Mr Shurf-uddin, Mr R N Mudholkar and Mr W C Bonnerjee to represent its views in England, and press upon the consideration of the British public the political reforms which the Congress has advocated "

Resolution XIII (e)  
Bombay, the fifth session of the Congress, 1889

#### Thanks to Bradlaugh and others

"That the best thanks of this Congress be tendered to Mr Charles Bradlaugh M P for the invaluable services rendered by him during the past year, as also to Sir William Wedderburn, Mr W S Caine, Mr J Bright, Mr Mac Laren M P, Mr J E Ellis M P, Mr George Yulu and Mr Dadabhai Naoroji for the unselfish zeal and ability with which they have presided over the British Agency of the Congress, further that they put on record an expression of their high appreciation of the manner in which

Mr. Digby C.I.E. Secretary of the Agency and Messrs Surendra Nath Banerjea, R.N. Mudholkar, W.C. Bonnerjee, Eardley Norton, and A. O. Hume—delegates to England respectively discharged the onerous duties imposed upon [them, and of their gratitude to all those members of the British public who so kindly welcomed and so sympathetically gave audience in over fifty public meetings and a far larger number of private meetings, to one or more of these delegates.”

Resolution VIII  
Calcutta—the sixth session, 1890.

### **Holding of Congress in England**

“That provisional arrangements be made to hold a Congress of not less than 100 delegates in England, all things being convenient in 1892 and that the several Standing Congress Committees be directed to report at the coming Congress, the names of the delegates that it is proposed to depute from their respective circles.”

Resolution XI, 1890

### **Funds for the British Committee**

“That a sum of Rs. 40,000 exclusive of individual donations, is assigned for the expenses of the British Committee of the Congress, and Rs 60,000 for the General Secretary’s office; and establishment and that the several circles and districts do contribute as arranged in Committee.”

Resolution XIII 1890:

### **Appointment of Deputation**

“That this Congress does formally appoint Messrs G. Yulu, Pherozshah Mehta, W.C. Bonnerjee, J. Adam, Mono Mohan Ghose A.O. Hume, Kali Charan Bannerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, D.A. Khare, and such other gentlemen as may volunteer for the duty with the sanction and approval of the Standing Congress Committee of the respective circles, to represent its views in England, and press upon the consideration of the British public the political reforms which the Congress has advocated.”

Resolution XV 1890.

### Thanks to the British Committee

"That this Congress hereby tenders its most grateful acknowledgements to Sir William Wedderburn, and the Members of the British Congress Committee, for the services rendered by them to India during the past year, and respectfully urges them to widen henceforth the sphere of their usefulness, by interesting themselves, not only in those questions dealt with by the Congress here, but in all Indian matters submitted to them, and properly vouched for, in which any principle accepted by the Congress is involved

Resolution VI  
Nagpur the 7th session 1891

### Holding of Congress in England

"That in view of the General Election now impending in England and in accordance with the recommendations of British Committee, the provisional arrangements, set on foot in pursuance of the Resolution passed at the Calcutta Congress of 1890 for holding, all things being convenient, a Congress of not less than 100 delegates in England in 1892, be now suspended until after such General Election "

Resolution XV, 1891

### Election of Naoroji to the House of Commons

"That this Congress most respectfully and cordially tenders, India's most heartfelt thanks to the electors of Central Finsbury for electing Mr Dadabhai Naoroji, their number in the House of Commons and it again puts on record its high estimate and deep appreciation of the services which that gentleman has rendered to this country, reiterates its unshaken confidence in him, and looks upon him as the Indian representative in the House of Commons "

Resolution XVI  
Allahabad, the 8th session 1892

### Expenses of the British Committee

"That a sum of Rupees Sixty thousand be assigned for the expenses of the British Committee and the cost of the Congress publication 'INDIA', and also for the expenses of the Joint General Secretary's Office, and that the several circles to contribute as arranged for the year 1897 "

Resolution XXII  
Calcutta 12th Session, 1896

## Propaganda in England

“That an agency be appointed in England for the purpose of organizing, in contact with the British Congress Committee, public meetings for the dissemination of information on Indian matters, and that funds be raised for the purpose.”

Resolution XXII  
Lucknow 15th Session 1899.

## Expenses of the Committee

“That a sum of Rs. 30,000 be assigned for the expenses of the British Committee and the cost of the publication of INDIA.”

Resolution XXII  
Lahore 16th Session 1900.

## Work of the British Committee

“That the Congress is of opinion that it is essential for the success of its work, that there should be a committee in London acting in contact with it and a weekly journal published in London propagating its views, and this Congress resolves that its British Committee, as at present constituted and the journal INDIA as published by it, be maintained and continued and the cost be raised in accordance with the following scheme:

That a circulation of 4,000 copies of INDIA be secured by allotting 1500 to Bengal, 700 copies to Madras, 200 copies to the North West Provinces, 50 copies to Oudh, 100 copies to the Punjab, 450 copies to Berar and the Central provinces and 1000 copies to Bombay; the rate of yearly subscription being Rs. 8.

That the following gentlemen be appointed secretaries for the circles against their names appeared, and be held responsible for the copies of INDIA assigned to their respective circles; and the money be paid in advance in two half-yearly instalments.

Bengal	{ Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu Babu Baikunta Nath Sen
Bombay	{ Hon. Mr. P.M. Mehta Mr. D.E. Wacha Hon. Mr. G.K. Gokhale

Madras	{ Hon'ble Mr Srinivasa Rao Mr Vijay Raghava Chariar Mr V Ryrn Nambier Mr G Subramania Iyer
Berar and the Central Provin ces	{ R N Mudholkar
N W Provinces & Oudh	{ Mr M M Malviya Mr Ganga Prasad Varma Mr S Sinha Mr A Nundy
Cawnpore	( Mr Prithwi Nath Pandit
Punjab	( Lala Hari Kishan Lal

' That with a view to meet the balance required to defray the expenses of INDIA and the British Committee a special delegation fee of Rs 10 be paid by each delegate in addition to the usual fee now paid by him with effect from 1902 "

Resolution 11  
Calcutta 17th Session 1901

### **Election of Congress Leaders to the Parliament**

"That this Congress desires to accord its most cordial support to the candidature of Mr Dadabhai Naoroji for North Lambeth, W C Bonnerjee for Walthamton, Sir Henry Cotton for Nottingham and Sir John Jardine for Roxburghshire, and appeals to the electors of these constituencies, that, in the interest of the people of India, they will be pleased to return them to Parliament so that they may not only loyally serve them, but represent in some manner the people of a country, which though a part of the British empire has no direct representative in the British Parliament "

Resolution XVI  
Madras 19th Session 1903

### **Deputation**

"That looking to the near approach of a General Election in England, and to the vital importance at the crises, of bringing the claims of India before the Electors, before the Parliamentary candidates, and before the Political leaders, it is expedient that the Congress should depute trustworthy and experienced representatives nominated by the different provinces to be present in England, and

that a fund of not less than Rs. 30,000 should be raised to meet the necessary expenses of such Deputation."

Resolution XV  
Bombay 20th Session 1904.

### Thanks to Gokhale & Lala Lajpat Rai

"That this Congress desires to record its sense of high appreciation of the valuable services recently rendered by the Hon'ble Mr. G.K. Gokhale C.I.E. and Lala Lajpat Rai in England."

Resolution XIX  
Banaras 21st Session 1905.

### Deputation

"That in view of the importance of urging the more pressing proposals of the Congress on the attention of the authorities in England at the present juncture, the Congress appoints its President the Hon'ble Mr. Gopal Krishan Gokhale C.I.E. as its delegate and deputes him to proceed to England for this purpose."

Resolution XX  
Banaras 21st Session 1905

### A.O. Hume and W. Wedderburn

"That the following message be addressed by the Congress to Mr. A.O. Hume :—

(i) "This Congress sends you its cordial greetings and congratulations. The reforms announced by Lord Morley are a partial fruition of the efforts made by the Congress during the last twenty three years, and we are gratified to think that to you as its father and founder they must be a source of great and sincere satisfaction."

Resolution XVII(a)

(ii) "This Congress offers its sincere congratulations to Sir William Wedderburn Bart" on his recent recovery from a serious illness and takes this opportunity to give expression to its deep gratitude for the unflagging zeal and devotion and the love, patience and singleness of purpose with which he has laboured for the Indian cause during the last twenty years, and which has been largely instrumental in securing for Congress views and representations the favourable consideration which they have received in England."

“This Congress desires to convey to its members of the British Committee its grateful thanks for their disinterested and strenuous services in the cause of India’s political advancement ”

Resolution XVII(b)  
Madras 24th Session 1908

### Deputation

“That the All India Congress Committee be authorised to arrange for a Deputation consisting, as far as possible of representatives from different provinces to England to represent Indian views on the following subjects —

- (1) Indians in South Africa and other Colonies
- (2) Press Act
- (3) Separation, Judicial and Executive functions, and
- (4) Important questions on which Congress has expressed opinion ”

Resolution XVIII  
Karachi 29 Session 1913

### Congress propaganda for Home Rule

“This Congress urges the Congress Committees, Home Rule Leagues, and other associations which have, as their object the attainment of Self Government within the Empire to carry on through the year an educative propaganda on law abiding and constitutional lines in support of the reforms put forward by the Indian National Congress and Moslem League ”

Resolution XIII  
Lucknow 32nd Session 1916

### Work of the British Committee

“That this Committee records its sense of high appreciation of the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee and resolves that the organization of the British Committee and INDA should be maintained ”

Resolution XXV  
Lucknow 32nd Session 1916



## Deputation

“That the All India Congress Committee be authorised to arrange a deputation consisting, as far as possible, of representatives from the different provinces, should proceed to England immediately after the War to press Indian claims as outlined in Resolution XII on the attention of the Government and people of England, and to arrange for a special session of the Congress in England, if necessary.”

Resolution XXII  
Lucknow 32nd Session 1916

“That the All India Congress Committee to authorised to send a deputation to England if necessary.”

Resolution XVIII  
Calcutta 32nd Session 1917

“The Congress requests Mr. Joseph Baptista and Mr. H.S.L. Polak, both now in England, to convey to the Labour Party in annual session assembled, its cordial welcome of their proffered help in obtaining the passage through Parliament of a statute embodying the grant of responsible government in India. This congress authorises the President to send a cablegram to Sir William Wedderburn Bart., Chairman of the British Committee of the National Congress, informing him that, in response to an invitation from representatives of the Labour Party, the Congress requesting Messrs Baptista and Polak to attend the forthcoming Congress.”

Resolution XIX  
Calcutta 33rd Session 1917

## Work of the Committee

“That this Congress records its sense of high appreciation of the services of Sir William Wedderburn and other members of the British Committee and resolves that the organization of the British Committee and INDIA should be maintained.”

Resolution XXII  
Calcutta 33rd Session 1917

## British Labour Party

“This Congress records its grateful appreciation of the valuable services rendered by the Labour Party in and outside Parliament through its office bearers, through its organization, its prominent

members and the daily and weekly press and specially Mr. Spoor, the accredited representative of the Party in Parliament for Indian affairs, by generally supporting the cause of Self Government for India and particularly by pressing the Congress view about Indian political Reforms on the Joint Select Committee, and on the occasion of passage of the Government of India Bill in Parliament, for its full sympathy with demands for full responsible government in India and its generous assurance to advance it through its power and influence "

Resolution XIX  
Amritsar 35th Session 1919

"This Congress urges its provincial Committees and other affiliated associations to promote Labour Unions throughout this country with the view of improving social, economic and political conditions of the Labouring classes, and securing for them a fair standard of living and a proper place in the body politic of India."

Resolution XX  
Amritsar 35th Session 1919

### Journal INDIA

"This Congress notes with satisfaction that it has been agreed by the Board of Directors of the journal INDIA that it shall represent the views of the Congress and refers the recommendations contained in the report of the Congress deputation for the extension and improvement of the said journal to the All India Congress Committee."

Resolution XXI  
Amritsar 35th Session 1919

### Mission in England

"This Congress is emphatically of opinion that the time has arrived for establishing a permanent mission for its own propagandist work in England and elsewhere, and appoints a committee of the following gentlemen to collect the necessary funds for the purpose and to select the personnel of the mission for the first year :

1. Lok. B. G. Tilak (Convener)
2. Mr. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar

3. Mr. T. Prakasam
4. Mr. B. Chakravarty
5. Mr. Maulana Mohammad Ali
6. Mr. S. R. Bomanji
7. Lala Lajpat Rai
8. Mr. G. S. Khaparde
9. Mr. Sayed Hasan
10. Hon'ble K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar, and
11. Pt. Rambhuj Dutt Chaudhry.

Resolution XXII  
Amritsar 35th Session 1919

“This Congress conveys its warmest thanks to the members of the Congress Deputation for their strenuous labours in the causes of the Congress in England.”

Resolution XXIV  
Amritsar 35th Session 1919

### Work of the Committee

“The Congress thankfully records its appreciation of the assistance given by the British Congress Committee and especially Dr. Clark, Dr. Rutherford, Mr. Holford Knight and J. M. Parikh to the Congress Deputation in its work in England and views with entire satisfaction the re-organization of the Committee as an executive body of the Congress pledged to carry on the Congress propaganda in England.”

Resolution XXV  
Amritsar 35th Session 1919

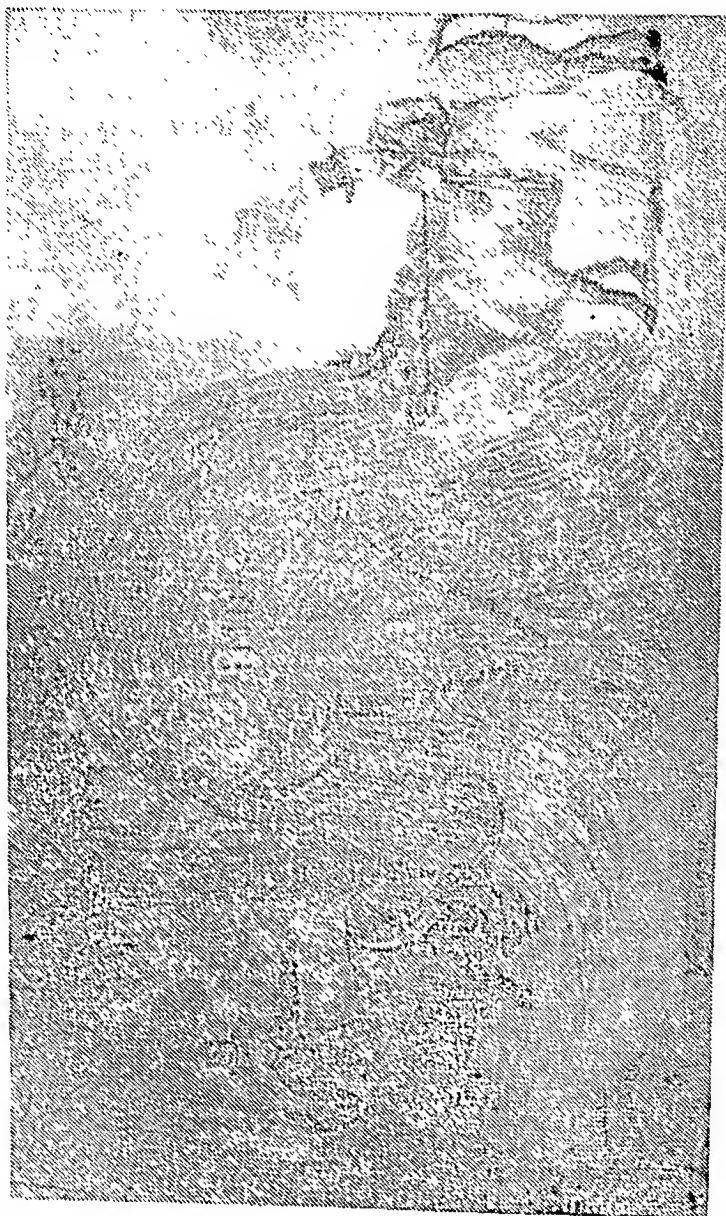
### Winding up the work of the Committee

- (1) “That in the opinion of this Congress, it is necessary in the interests of India to disseminate correct information about India and Indian questions in foreign countries.
- (2) This Congress while authorising the All India Congress Committee to give to foregoing resolution :
  - (a) That the publication of the newspaper “India” as an organ of the Congress be discontinued forthwith and the contracts of the present staff be terminated.
  - (b) That subject to the existing liabilities in connection with the British Congress Committee and newspaper

"India" no further financial assistance from the Congress fund be supplied for the purposes ; and

- (c) That a Committee consisting of Mr. Benspoor, Mr. Parikh Mr. Holford Knight, Dr. Vakıl, Mr. M. H Kidwai and Mr. Dube be appointed for winding up the affairs of the British Congress Committee and newspaper "India".

Resolution No 3, Appendix (F)  
Nagpur 36th Session 1920



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